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Steve and Cindy Moore, April 2015



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You can teach an old dog new tricks



As you read this, I will have just got back from a week in Sharm on the Sinai Peninsula. Within the pages of this magazine, you'll find my article about diving in Scapa Flow in the Orkney Islands. I have been to both places innumerable times, so what made it different this time around? Simple - I was using a recreational rebreather.

I have dabbled with various tech CCRs in the past, and am qualified on both the Poseidon MK6/SE7EN and the Hollis Explorer, but this was the first time that I had really used one to their full potential when I was on assignment for the magazine. And what a difference it made to my dives, not only with respect to the extended dive times, ability to get closer to marine life because of the lack of bubbles and staying warmer due to breathing warm, moist air, but because I was reduced to being a relative novice diver once again. Diving a rebreather, whether SCR or CCR, requires a totally different mindset to open-circuit diving because of the buoyancy issues, and so I really had to concentrate and focus instead of just relying on instinct and techniques honed through years of scuba diving, and this in turn made dives which I had done countless times feel brand new.

So here's a challenge - this summer, why not try a new diving discipline, whether that is CCR, sidemount or even freediving. It's a whole new world out there, I urge you to explore it.

NEVER MISS ANOTHER ISSUE - You can now buy individual issues of Sport Diver and have them delivered direct to your door via: www.buyamag.co.uk/sportdiver Use code: SPD34 and get £1 off the September 2015 issue!

Mark Evans, Editor
mark.evans@sportdiver.co.uk

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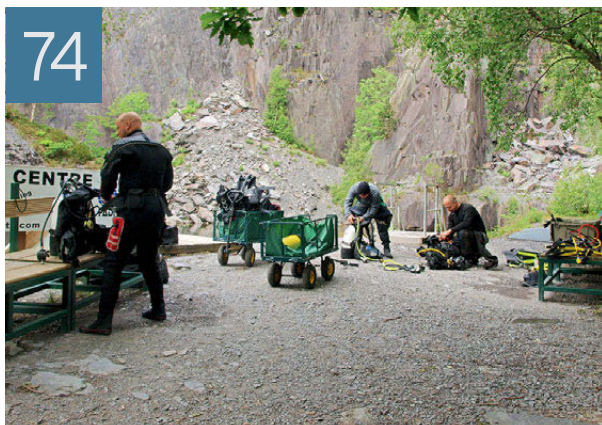
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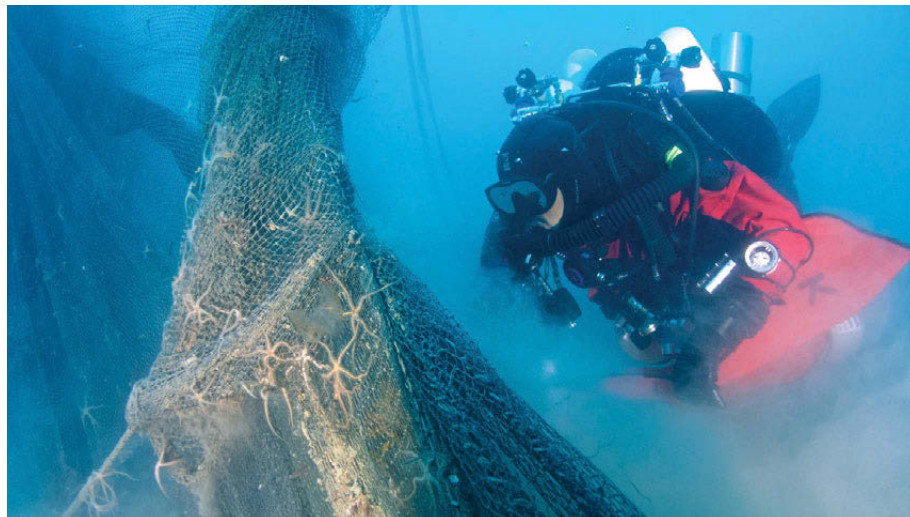
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NEWS

Each month, we collate the latest industry news from right here in the UK, as well as all over our water planet. To find out the most up-to-date news and views, check out the website:

www.sportdiver.co.uk

Fourth Element turning fishing nets into swimwear



Fourth Element has unveiled its latest range of eco swimwear, OceanPositive.

OceanPositive swimwear and hydroskin rashguards are made from 78% recycled nylon. The source for this nylon is fishing nets which have been abandoned by fishing vessels having snagged on reefs and wrecks.

These 'Ghost Nets' amount to nearly 640,000 tonnes of lost gear per year. The hazard is to marine life from invertebrates to large marine mammals, as well as divers.

Dive teams are 'harvesting' these nets, removing them from the sea, and bringing them back to port, after which the nets are collected, recycled and spun into nylon yarn.

Fourth Element is using fabric made from this yarn in Italy, combined with Lycra to make OceanPositive.

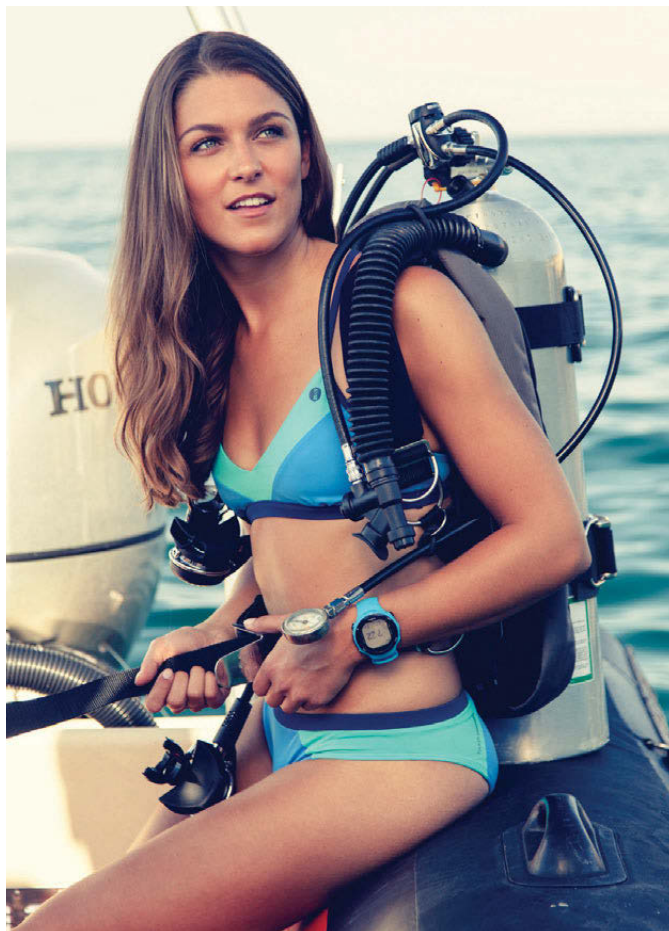
Every diver wears swimwear under their wetsuit. Fourth Element's new swimwear is designed to be practical under wetsuits - some bikini styles have no clasps, others have a single clasp or tie to as be more practical and comfortable.

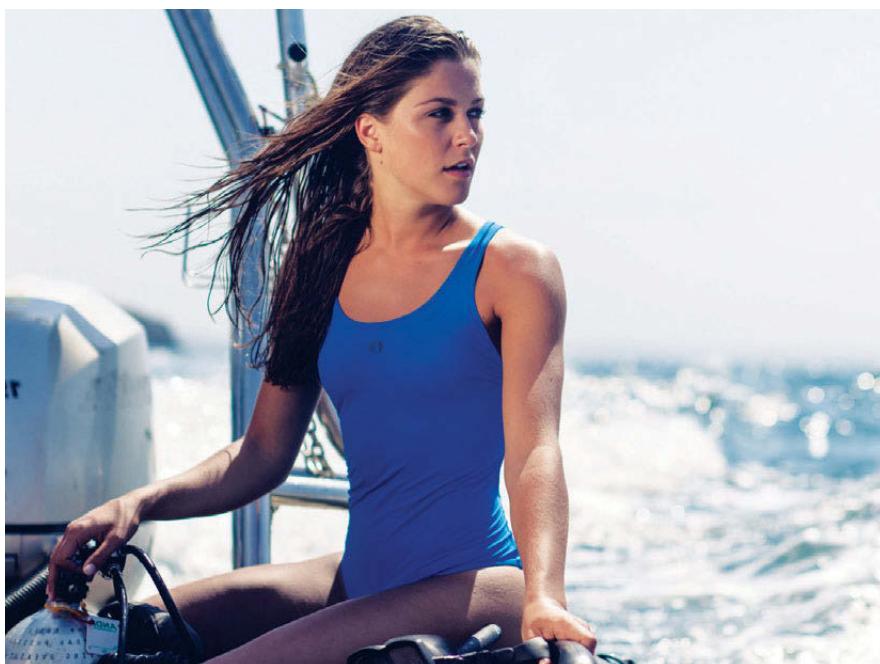
A spokesperson for Fourth Element said: "We believe that that all divers are passionate about the ocean. Whether it is wreck diving, cave diving, photography or wildlife encounters, the environment in which we dive is critical to the quality of that dive.

"We believe that we all have a responsibility to protect this environment in whatever way we can.

"We want to create a market for this product amongst divers principally, and longer term outside of diving."

Fourth Element supports the Ghost Fishing Project and other marine charities through financial contributions. Sales of OceanPositive will support the Ghost Fishing Project to enable more net collections to take place in future. ■





DIVING
WITH FRIENDS



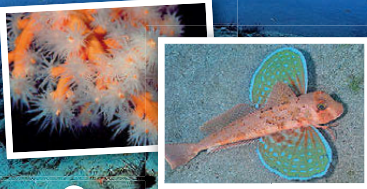
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THE DARK WATER GALLERY LTD

By Nick Oneill Art

COMING SOON

UK's first dedicated marine life gallery set to open

The UK's first gallery dedicated to marine life art is set to open in Brighton next month. The Dark Water Gallery, which will feature work by artist Nick Oneill as well as other guests, will open its doors for the first time on 3 July.

Among the pieces featured will be huge original artworks, prints, sculptures, T-shirts, jewellery and gifts. And let's not forget Nick's famous life-size shark paintings! For more information, visit www.thedarkwatergallery.com.

Dive centres unite against breakwater construction

Dive centres and marine conservation organisations have joined forces in a bid to stop the construction of a huge breakwater in Cornwall. Plans have been made to re-open Dean Quarry on the Lizard Peninsula to ship rock to Swansea for the construction of a tidal lagoon. To do this a jetty/breakwater will have to be built. Building the breakwater - which would stretch out into the Mannacles Reef - would have a devastating impact on the varied wildlife that calls the reef home, the dive centres say. For the vast majority of wildlife in the area - which includes dogfish, cuckoo wrasse and the rare (and protected) pink sea fans - both habitat and breeding grounds will be affected. The campaigners plan to map the area and, along with video and photographic evidence gathered from the dives, prove the breakwater will cause massive damage to the habitat and, therefore, the population of countless native underwater species. A spokesperson for Kennack Diving, one of the dive centres involved, said: "Over the last couple of weeks we, Porthkerris Divers, the Marine Conservation Society and Seasearch have all been participating in survey dives of the proposed area of the Mannacles Reef to be developed as well as the close surrounding area. "We have found vast quantities of the pink sea fans, which thrive in this area but struggle elsewhere in the UK, as well as countless other species all of which will be affected." For more information, visit: www.kennackdiving.co.uk.

New Raja Ampat Aggressor announced

Aggressor Fleet and Dancer Fleet have unveiled a new liveaboard: the Raja Ampat Aggressor. The new 30-metre steel yacht will host 16 guests in private air-conditioned staterooms each with a large picture window or porthole, and private bathroom. The yacht includes a spacious sundeck, comfortable salon, dive deck with camera

tables, rinse tanks and gear lockers, nitrox fills, and scrumptious meals, between-dive snacks, around the clock service from a professional crew of 13 and all the signature Aggressor and Dancer Fleet amenities. The four main areas the Raja Ampat Aggressor is offering itineraries are: Raja Ampat, Cenderawasih Bay, Banda Sea and Triton Bay. www.aggressor.com.

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Emperor Divers awarded four Certificates of Excellence



Emperor Divers has received four TripAdvisor Certificate of Excellence Awards for its El Gouna, Marsa Alam and Sharm El Sheikh dive centres plus, for the first time, Emperor Divers Liveaboards - Emperor Elite, Emperor Superior and Emperor Asmaa.

Now in its fifth year, the prestigious Certificate of Excellence Award recognises establishments that consistently earn great TripAdvisor reviews from travellers.

The accolade is given only to establishments that consistently achieve outstanding traveller reviews on TripAdvisor.

When selecting Certificate of Excellence winners, TripAdvisor uses a regis-

tered algorithm to measure the account reviews ratings. Businesses must maintain an overall TripAdvisor rating of at least four out of five in volume as well as on-going reviews.

"We are very proud of the entire Emperor team for winning these Awards. Many thanks to all our guests who took the time to complete a review," said Luke Atkinson, Area Manager for Emperor Divers Red Sea.

"Being recognised like this always creates a feel-good factor, especially when it comes from those very people who enjoyed the diving and service that we work hard at to deliver."

For more information on Emperor Divers, visit www.emperordivers.com.

Pro Dive Mexico awarded TripAdvisor cert

Pro Dive Mexico, one of the most established dive operations in Latin America, has received the TripAdvisor Certificate of Excellence for a fifth consecutive year.

When selecting Certificate of Excellence winners, TripAdvisor uses a proprietary algorithm to determine the honourees that takes into account the quality and quantity of reviews and opinions submitted by travellers on TripAdvisor over a 12-month period. To qualify, a business must maintain an overall TripAdvisor bubble rating of at least four out of five, have a minimum number of reviews and must have been listed on TripAdvisor for at least 12 months.

"Winning the TripAdvisor Certificate of Excellence is a true source of pride for the entire team at Pro Dive Mexico, and we would like to thank all of our past guests who took the time to complete a review on TripAdvisor," said Markus Fleischmann, CEO & Founder of Pro Dive Mexico.

"There is no greater seal of approval than being recognised by one's customers. With the TripAdvisor Certificate of Excellence based on customer reviews, the accolade is a remarkable vote of confidence to our business and our continued commitment to excellence."

For more info, visit: www.prodivemex.com.



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Pico Sport to assist BBC Oceans team

Pico Sport Azores has announced it is one of the partners for the next BBC Oceans series, set for release in 2017.

The dive centre will assist the BBC in filming sequences of whales, sharks, mobula rays and various other species that inhabit the deep waters of the mid-Atlantic ridge.

Filming will take until May 2017, with the series set to air by the end of the same year.

Top Portuguese photographer and cameraman Nuno Sa will take part in the shoot, while German drone team Visualmondo will secure shots from the air.

The waters off the Azores are a hotspot for marine life, including blue sharks, devil rays and dolphins, among others.

For more information on Pico Sport, visit: www.scubaazores.com.

Dive resort long-listed for Responsible Tourism award

Secret Paradise PVT LTD Maldives has been long-listed in the 'Best for engaging people & culture' category, awarded to a tourism business, organisation or initiative that puts the celebration of local people and their cultures at the heart of memorable tourism experiences.

Founded and organised by responsibletravel.com and announced on World Responsible Tourism Day at WTM London, the Awards were founded to find and celebrate the most exciting and enduring examples of responsible tourism from around the world. Their purpose is to recognise, reward, inspire and to challenge others to do more, and to use the Awards to surprise and inspire tourists and the tourism industry with wonderful travel experiences.

Over 200 tourism organisations, initiatives, businesses and short films have been selected for the next stage of the awards across 12 categories. The 206 tourism organisations and initiatives come from a record 69 countries worldwide and it is the first year that the World Responsible Tourism Awards Longlist encompasses every continent on the planet.

Justin Francis, Awards founder and Managing Director of organisers Responsible Travel, said: The incredible variety of organisations which have made it through to the Longlist this year demonstrates just how widely recognised and important responsible tourism is becoming around the world. For more info, visit: www.secretparadisemaldives.com.



Anthony's Key Resort Inducted into Hall of Fame

Anthony's Key Resort has received the 2015 TripAdvisor Certificate of Excellence and been inducted into the Hall of Fame.

The Certificate of Excellence award celebrates excellence in hospitality and is given only to establishments that consistently achieve great traveller reviews on TripAdvisor.

The Hall of Fame was created to honour those businesses that have earned a Certificate of

Excellence for five consecutive years.

Samir Galindo, General Manager at Anthony's Key Resort, said: "We are honoured to be awarded the TripAdvisor Certificate of Excellence and to be inducted into their Hall of Fame for winning the award five years in a row."

"We would like to thank guests who took the time to complete a review on TripAdvisor."



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Ride the Interceptor at Anglesey ScubaFest

The Interceptor is the new RIB of SBS Charters, and it is a sleek-looking, all-black, twin-engine Humber. Skippered by ex-RNLI helmsman and diver Aubrey 'Digs' Diggle, the Interceptor will be running shuttles out to a selection of dive sites in the vicinity of the 'host' beach, Porth Dafarch, including the wreck of the Missouri, during Anglesey ScubaFest (14-16 August). Places are filling up fast, so book your spots now to avoid disappointment.

As well as the RIB diving, there is unlimited shore diving off Porth Dafarch and other nearby hotspots such as Trearddur Bay, Ravenspoint and McKenzie Pier. This is a prime opportunity to 'test dive' the latest equipment from a host of manufacturers who will be displaying their wares, including Apeks, Aqualung, Mares, BARE, Atomic Aquatics, Weezele and Zeagle.

If you know any non-divers, bring them along too, as they will be able to book in for a free Discover Scuba Diving session in the pool at the local leisure centre. This will be running on Saturday and Sunday, and anyone can have a go, from the age of eight upwards.

As an added bonus, the newly reopened Vivian Diving Centre in the stunning Snowdonia National Park (a mere 40-minute drive from Porth Dafarch) is offering special rates for ScubaFest divers - £5 for members, and £7 for non-members. Annual membership is just £5. A wonderfully scenic dive in its own right, it is also a handy option if the weather turns nasty, or why not call in on your way home and rinse your kit off while enjoying a dive?

Tickets for the ScubaFest are on sale now, priced at £49.49 per person, and this includes two nights camping (Friday 14 and Saturday 15 August) at the Anglesey Outdoor Centre; a breakfast bap and hot beverage on Saturday 15 and Sunday 16 August; live bands Coffin Dodgers and Many Years From Now on Friday and Saturday night; a welcome alcoholic beverage on Friday night; and a limited-edition Anglesey ScubaFest T-shirt. Kids tickets (aged 2-12) are £9.98 and include two nights camping and a breakfast bap and hot beverage on the Saturday and Sunday mornings.

You can book your tickets, or find out more about the Anglesey ScubaFest by logging onto www.theangleseyscubafest.com

Meet Halls and Torbet at this year's Sport Diver Awards!

With just a few months left before this year's Sport Diver Awards it's time to give you, our readers, a reminder of what is on offer at this year's event...

Most excitingly, by casting your vote for your favourite companies, products and people within the world of diving you could win the trip of a lifetime to the luxurious Wakatobi Dive Resort. Just visit www.sportdiver.co.uk/vote and fill out the questionnaire. It's that easy! Categories we're asking your opinion on include Best UK Dive Centre, Best Tour Operator and Best PADI Instructor. Even if you don't luck-out with the top prize, the Awards represent an opportunity to applaud those who deserve it.

Almost as exciting as the opportunity to win a fabulous holiday are this year's hosts: Messrs Monty Halls and Andy Torbet. The pair will take to the stage at this year's ceremony - set for the Saturday evening during the October Dive Show - to announce the winners, hand out the trophies and no doubt regale the crowd with a tale or two... If you would like to attend this year's event, which is open to the public for the very first time and promises to be one hell of a party, visit: www.sportdiver.co.uk/awards2015.

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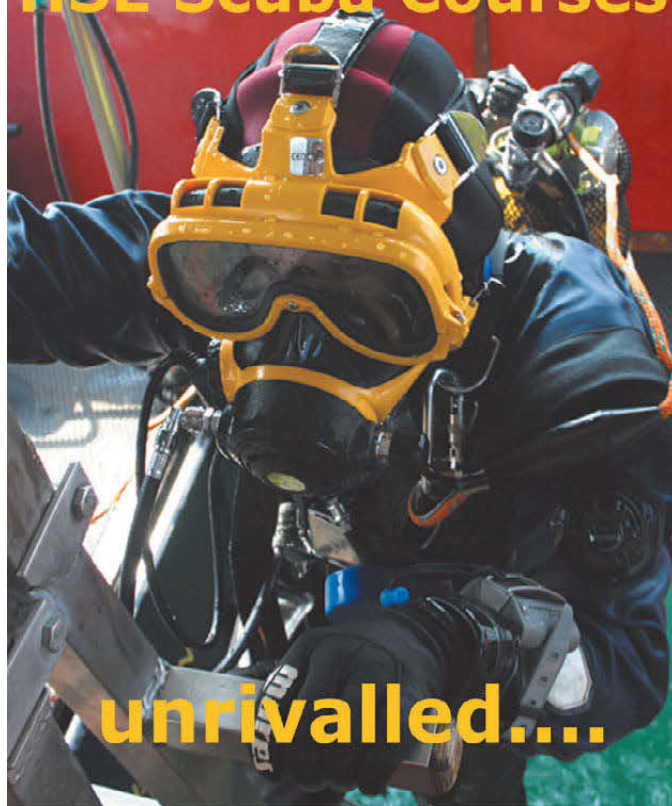
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DIVE DOCTOR: Medical Q&A

Dr Oliver Firth has gained considerable experience in the field of diving and hyperbaric medicine since joining LDC in 2006. He is an Approved Medical Examiner of Divers for the UK HSE, and a medical referee for the UK Sport Diving Medical Committee. He is involved in the management of all types of diving-related illness, including recompression treatment, as well as providing hyperbaric oxygen therapy for non-diving conditions. He remains a passionate diver and has participated in various expeditions and conservation projects throughout the globe.



Q: I've been an avid surfer ever since I could first balance on a board, and growing up in Hawaii meant I spent more time in the water than on land. Only recently did I get into diving though. I used to get ear infections a lot as a kid and when I descend I'm struggling to clear both my ears, usually worse on the left. I saw the local doc here and he's telling me I have some sort of growth in the ear canal – any idea what it could be and how I can get some relief? I can hear fine and it doesn't hurt when I surf but the doc's got me worried now.

A: I think I can have a good guess at what this is – something called an external auditory canal exostosis, otherwise known as "surfer's ear". It's not however just restricted to surfers – kayakers, jet-skiers, sailors can all get it too. It's a reaction of the skin of the ear canal to years of irritation by cold water and wind. The long-term result is a slow overgrowth of a bony-like substance, giving rise to a pearly-white rounded lump in the ear canal. It looks a bit alarming if you've not seen one before, but in reality it's harmless. The only snag is that if the growth becomes so large that it blocks the movement of wax and water, then infection can result from waterlogging of the canal. Usually an exostosis this size would take decades to form, but they can be surgically removed. If you are in the water a lot of the time then the advice is generally to keep the canal as warm and as dry as possible – wear a hood/cap, try ear plugs (vented if diving), and give the ear canals a good freshwater rinse when you're done for the day.

Q: Hi, I need some urgent advice please. I have suffered with irritable bowel syndrome and heartburn for over 20 years. Last year the heartburn got so bad, I was having stabbing pains in the middle of chest every night, which took my breath away, and shoulder blade pains too. The only time I didn't have the pain is when having an alcoholic drink – think it numbs the nerve

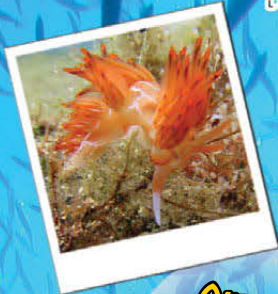
endings! I thought I was having a heart attack, but my GP said no. So in the end I had to have an endoscopy (2 weeks ago) and I was diagnosed with a Sliding Hiatal Hernia. The GP didn't know whether I could carry on diving and I'm booked on a liveaboard in Egypt next month – can I still go?

A: OK, firstly let's just get some terminology straight. A hernia occurs when an internal part of the body pushes through a weakness in the muscle or surrounding tissue wall. They can be found in all sorts of places – typically the groin, around the belly button, or in this case, the stomach.

Two main types of stomach hernia are distinguishable, and they have different implications for fitness to dive. By far the most common is the sliding hiatal hernia (95%), where the upper portion of the stomach slides upwards through the diaphragm into the space occupied by the oesophagus (food pipe). This hernia can cause gastroesophageal reflux (giving you that acid burning in the chest), but it often causes no symptoms. If you have significant gastroesophageal reflux then it should be treated before diving (usually with anti-acid pills), as there is an increased risk of acid reflux and aspiration (inhaling stomach contents) with the horizontal position adopted during a dive. Otherwise a sliding hiatal hernia does not by itself contraindicate diving.

The second type (5%), a paraesophageal or rolling hernia, is a protrusion of the stomach through a separate opening of the diaphragm. However, part of the stomach can become trapped within a paraesophageal hiatal hernia, and, during ascent, could rupture. Thus, paraesophageal hiatal hernia is considered a contraindication to diving. I'd say your chances of making that liveaboard are pretty good, but get the all-important sign off in advance through your local doc.

For more Q&As from Dr Oli, check out:
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Become a wreck 'tec

Jason Brown reports on the inaugural NAS Wreck Detective course



PLUS

- We compile a selection of the world's greatest shipwreck dives - are your favourites on the list?
- David Jones clips on his close-up lens to seek out the macro marine life in that shark haven of the Philippines, Malapascua
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TOP *Wall* DIVES

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Photographs by MARK EVANS, GAVIN ANDERSON AND WILL HARRISON



BLOODY BAY WALL, LITTLE CAYMAN, CAYMAN ISLANDS

Little Cayman is regarded by some as *the* wall diving destination, and mostly because of Bloody Bay Wall, an undersea cliff face off the north of the island that drops to thousands of metres. The thing that makes this sight so spectacular is something of a surprise, however. Yes, sharks occasionally patrol the waters and other impressive creatures such as barracuda and turtles can be seen, but they're not the highlight. Diving Bloody Bay Wall is all about the sponges. No, that's not a typo. The colours are incredible: red rope sponges, orange vase sponges and emerald tube sponges fight for your attention along with fiery basket sponges. It is this dense, colourful backdrop that makes the scene so special. The sponges are a particular treat for photographers, who are guaranteed vivid foregrounds as they busily snap shots of grouper, jacks and barracuda - and, of course, the aforementioned sharks. Best of all, as part of the Bloody Bay Marine Park, this site is guaranteed to remain a true diving spectacle for years to come.



GREAT WHITE WALL, FIJI

So named because of the soft white corals that cover its surface, Great White Wall really is a site - and a sight - like no other. The density of the soft corals beggars belief, with the scene looking more like a ski slope than a reef. Visiting divers will have never seen anything like it. Whip corals and gorgonian sea fans jut out from the 'snowy' surface, breaking up the sweeping piste. While the white coral is the show-stealer, there is a great deal more to this site, including a healthy reef top where hard and soft corals fight for space with sponges and crinoids. There is, of course, a large variety of reef-dwelling critters to spot too. Topographically, a dive on Great White Wall is also varied - it's not just about the wall itself. Divers can also enjoy swim-throughs and a cave that is absolutely smothered in life. It is worth noting that the Great Wall is often subject to currents (ranging from very mild to pretty strong), so divers with limited experience are probably better off upping their experience before giving it a go. But do give it a go - it is a site like no other.



MALDIVES

When most people think of the Maldives they conjure up images of white sandy beaches rolling into shallow, turquoise waters, which in turn drop onto tranquil, sheltered reefs. And yes, there are plenty of those. But there are also walls. Some of the dive sites in the Maldives can reach technical depths, and where you get those kind of depths you naturally get a wall or two. Sites such as Bodu Hoholha, Maa Kandu and Mahaala all boast walls, all bursting with life and colour - as you would expect from a Maldives dive site! These deeper areas are also commonly home to larger species of fish, including a number of different sharks, so keep your eyes peeled. Strong currents can also be commonplace so do make sure you're comfortable with such conditions and, if you are, maybe consider taking a reef hook to make things a little simpler. While the walls on offer in the Maldives are perhaps not the best in the world, they are a very welcome addition to the shallower offerings the area has to offer and, on account of that combination (as well as the quality of life topside), are well worth a place on this list.



BLUE CORNER, PALAU

Palau's Blue Corner is not for the faint-hearted. Easily the Republic's most famous dive site, Blue Corner consists of a ridge that juts out into deep Pacific waters and typically punchy currents. The strength and unpredictability of these currents makes this a dive for advanced divers only. Those with suitable experience will not be disappointed - the currents, as well as being great fun, bring in plenty of nutrients, which attract fish life of various sizes all the way up the food chain. So, once you've soaked up the health of the reef itself, which includes a multitude of soft corals, gorgonian sea fans and anemones, you'll be able to focus your attention on the bigger stuff: schools of jacks, snapper and barracuda to name but a few. And the even bigger stuff: sharks! Below, to the side, overheard... the sharks are everywhere. Mantas are also not an uncommon sight. Because the currents can be so strong, reef hooks are commonly used - the upwelling currents can pop you up and over the wall with ease. Hooks are especially useful if you're a photographer and need both hands to operate your equipment. More generally speaking, it's nice to hook in and watch the show. And it is one hell of a show!

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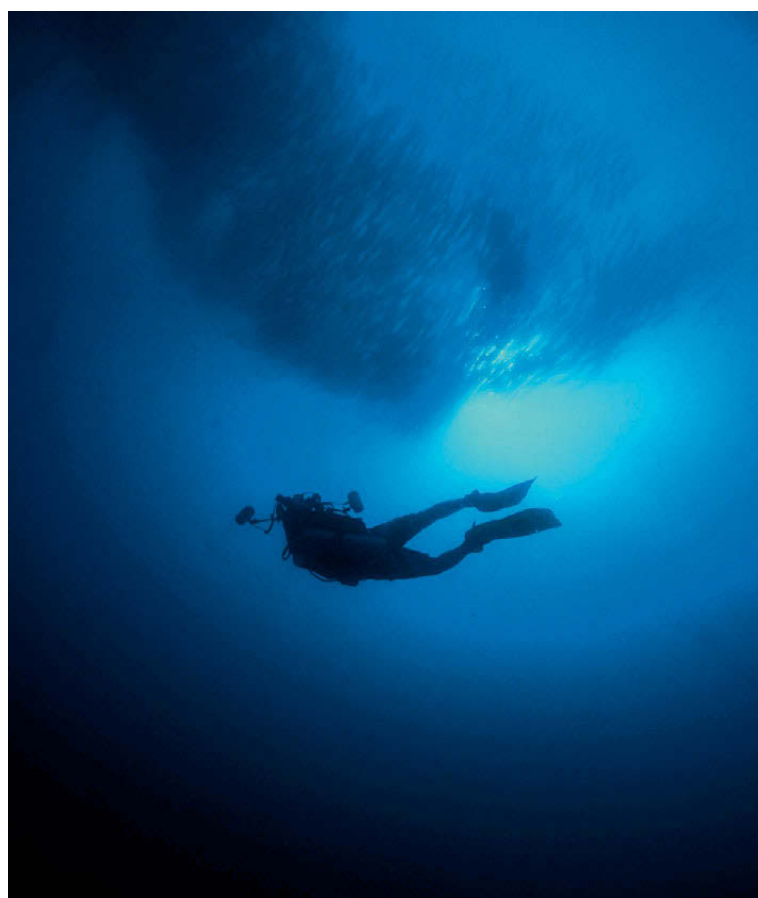


SIPADAN, MALAYSIA

The island of Sipadan is regarded as one of the finest wall diving destinations on the planet, and for very good reason. What makes this tiny island off the northeast coast of Borneo so special is that, unlike nearby islands such as Mabul and Si-Amil, which slope off to relatively shallow depths, the waters off Sipadan drop to 600m. As such, all manner of pelagic marine life can be found marauding the water column, from manta rays to hammerhead sharks. In among the many turtles (both hawksbill and green) and the shoals of barracuda, divers also have the chance of seeing whalesharks.

Once home to numerous dive centres, the island is now protected and only accessible by dayboat - and with a limited number of spots available. As such the reef has, in the years since the change, benefited hugely - it is now healthier than ever.

Most dive centres run two or three dives on the Sipadan walls during a day, with lunch spent on the island itself, with sheltered benches and palm-tree-lined beaches making for a lovely setting to off-gas and chat through the great diving with your fellow guests. It is a special day out.



THE BROTHERS, EGYPT

Few would argue with the Brothers being featured on this list. With coral-clad walls dropping to technical depths, visibility that can reach in the 40-50 metre range and a selection of marine life that will just about get any diver excited, it is a wall diving destination that has it all. Add to this the destination's accessibility (as far as British divers are concerned) and you really are onto a winner.

Made up of two islands - Big Brother and Little Brother - the site is a regular on the Red Sea liveaboard scene, and for very good reason: sharks. A variety of shark species can be found in the waters around these isles, including thresher, grey reef and oceanic whitetips. Hammerheads are also often spotted. Sharks tend to mean healthy reefs and boy, are these reefs healthy. A natural protectorate since 1983, the Brothers' reefs have thrived. The walls are awash with black corals, gorgonian sea fans and myriad other hard and soft corals. All manner of critters can be found hiding within, while schools of fish gather in the blue. Oh yeah... Big Brother also boasts two wrecks, the Aida and Numidia. That's right, folks: wreck diving on a wall!

BALICASAG, PHILIPPINES

Balicasag Island is widely regarded as one of the best dive spots in the Philippines, which in turn is commonly rated as one of the best places to dive on the planet... so visitors are in for a real treat here!

The island boasts a variety of dive sites, including sloping coral reefs and rocky outcrops, but the finest of them all is the wall in the protected area of the island: Balicasag Sanctuary. This truly is a wall that has it all, from small caverns and a great swim-through to a plethora of vivid marine life, so whatever it is you're into, this site is guaranteed to please.

While the wall is filled with eye-catching critters such as nudibranchs, crinoids and anemonefish, don't forget to look in the blue for the big stuff, which can include barracuda and sharks.

A full-page background image showing an underwater scene. On the left, a dark, silhouetted rock wall or reef structure descends into the water. Several divers are visible as dark shapes against the bright blue water. One diver is positioned higher up, near the wall, while others are further down. The water is a deep, clear blue, and the overall atmosphere is serene and mysterious.

TURKS AND CAICOS ISLANDS, CARIBBEAN

As a wall diving destination, the diminutive Turks and Caicos Islands is a global giant. The archipelago is made up of two island chains that sit atop two limestone banks. In between these two chains is the Turks Island Passage, a Caribbean abyss that reaches down to depths of literally thousands of metres.

While most divers tend to locate themselves in Providenciales or Grand Turk, excellent diving can also be found off other isles such as West Caicos and Salt Cay. Marine life is plentiful in these parts (including, alas, lionfish), with areas such as the Princess Alexandra National Park having a positive impact on the health of the local underwater world. Divers can expect busy dives keeping an eye out for all manner of creatures one would expect in deep Caribbean waters. As well as grouper, grunts and schools of jacks, divers can also hope to see turtles, rays and eels. Sharks are also a common sight. While Caribbean reef sharks and nurse sharks are the most regularly seen, blacktips, tiger sharks and hammerheads can also be spotted. And then there are the dolphins and, if you're really lucky, maybe even a humpback whale or two...

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BUNAKEN MARINE PARK, NORTH SULAWESI, INDONESIA

The seafloor in Bunaken Marine Park reaches to almost 2,000m in parts. Located in the Coral Triangle and having benefitted from marine park status since 1991, the deep waters here are home to a considerable array of marine life. As well as being home to nearly 400 different species of coral, about 90 species of fish also inhabit the park. The variety of walls on offer is extensive, and visiting divers will no doubt leave with a list of favourites, but be warned: the competition is fierce. With clear water and walls that start from just a few metres below the surface and disappear to technical depths, the reefs are bouncing with life, from brightly coloured nudibranchs to schooling fish. The challenge is splitting your time looking through the colourful reef for critters such as scorpionfish and leaf fish and staring at the more-attention-stealing creatures such as barracudas and Napoleon wrasse that hang on the reef's edge. And then there is the Big Blue... don't forget to commit some decent time to that or else you might miss the various sharks, rays and turtles that cruise around on a regular basis. And the occasional whaleshark, of course...

BLUE WALL, ZANZIBAR, TANZANIA

One of the signature dives on southeast Zanzibar is the deep, challenging Blue Wall, which is only offered to experienced divers who have proved their capabilities on previous deep dives with local operators.

This is not a dive for the faint-hearted - you do a free descent through endless blue water until the 36-38m bottom comes into view. There is usually a strong current running and, as you near the seabed, it just drops away from sight. This is the top of the wall.

As you go over the edge, the bottom of the wall can be seen below at 70-75m. You need to have excellent air consumption, superlative buoyancy skills and be comfortable deep and in a current. However, for experienced divers, this is a thrilling dive, offering high chances of pelagic encounters with the big boys, including large rays, yellow-tail tuna, turtles, giant grouper, Napoleon wrasse, blacktip sharks and bull sharks, all set against the backdrop of a sheer wall.

There is no guarantee that the weather will allow you to dive Blue Wall, and whether you even get the opportunity lies entirely with the discretion of the dive centre staff, but meet the necessary criteria and you are in for a seriously wild ride.

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The PADI Diving Society has been in existence since 1997, and from humble beginnings has grown substantially, within a few years reaching the heady heights of 'world's biggest diving club'. With membership now standing at over 180,000 keen, active divers across the planet, the PADI Diving Society represents a formidable 'tribe'. Now all three sectors of the PADI Diving Society - Americas, Asia-Pacific and Europe, Middle East and Africa - have moved from been connected but fractured, uniting under a global banner and becoming one entity, with a unified approach and single magazine title reaching all members, everywhere. The magazines in each region will be targeted at their members, with reports and features on dive sites throughout their turf, plus tantalising glimpses of what lies across the world. Benefits and Society partners will also remain regional, but there is now the opportunity for a global focus, giving PADI Diving Society members the chance to make great savings wherever they travel through the scuba world.

SIMON SAYS...

Simon R Chance, manager, PADI Diving Society, and executive, PADI Retailer and Resort Associations

THE LIFE OF BRYAN



Photo credit: Mark Evans

At the recent ScubaFest in Cornwall, it was my great pleasure to spend some time with another industry 'old timer' and to reflect on the opportunities offered to PADI Pros by this wonderful sport of ours.

Snorkelling since the age of six, his grandparents gave the young Bryan Stanislas a Kodak Instamatic and a very-grown-up Bolex C8 8mm cine-camera. Around the same time, Jacques Cousteau was inspiring us both with the images he brought to Saturday morning TV, stirring our imaginations and creating a desire to do some exploring of our own. Bryan's Forces career having been curtailed by a motorcycle accident and knee injury, he used some of his modest Forces leaving pay to buy his first set of diving gear, setting his future path; within four years he became a diving professional and, in 1993, he gained his full PADI OWSI credentials. This is where our paths first came together, when I joined the PADI offices in Bristol, serving Bryan and his employers,

Andark Diving, as valued PADI members. Now a fully-paid-up Gadget Geek in both his diving and image-making roles, Bryan broadened his horizons with an instructing/filming job on a superyacht in South Africa, however he had another close scrape when the yacht nearly sank, so it was back to Blighty, Andark and other UK-based instructional jobs - with a side order of firefighting thrown in for added spice - for another few years while he also started to build his own underwater filming interests, into what we know today as H2O Films. Growing from strength to strength, H2O Films also 'went aerial' with some success in the Off-shore industry, and Bryan also runs Pro SCUBA Training, teaching primarily HSE SCUBA media diving courses (which your esteemed editor Mark Evans is due to attend in the near future), Bryan also recently created DiveOnlineTV and, looking to give a little back to the industry, Bryan is a key driver of UK National Dive Week; 2016 now holds some exciting further opportunities with the H2O Films Internship of which, I am sure, we will hear more very soon. All in all, although unique to him, in many ways Bryan's career serves as an example of the variety that can be enjoyed as a PADI Pro. By adapting and creating opportunities, rather than sitting back and waiting for them, Bryan has worked alongside industry greats as well as others who are maybe not so well known, but who play an equally important role in the UK dive industry. His latest move has been to further develop his technical diving and, having given Bryan the choice of closing words for this piece, his sage advice was "It's refreshing, every once in a while, to be the student again!"

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PADI Coastal Diver Distinctive Specialty



A new PADI Distinctive Specialty, The Coastal Diver, is an exciting and potentially life-saving addition to courses directed at diver safety. Written and taught by Mark Rayner, Wavecrest Scuba's Master Instructor, The Coastal Diver focuses on providing the diver with training in advanced understanding of the coastal environment. Diving around the coast presents many issues - conditions here in the UK are quick to change and can easily turn hostile. This led Mark to realise that local knowledge and understanding of this may well save lives.

A large part of this course is conducted before anyone gets wet. "It is about understanding your particular dive site," Mark says. "Assessing the conditions before entering the water and know-

ing how they will change during the duration of the dive."

To illustrate this, Mark teaches how the strength of tidal currents change over their progression to high water, where the current runs and what to do if you're caught in it.

Next, important safety equipment is summarised; different modes of signalling are explained, including Morse code, and signals for boats and aircraft.

Finally, all these elements are incorporated into two open water scenarios - Mark's most-recent Coastal Diver, Steven Gregory, passed his course simulating what to do after ascending from a pleasure dive and being caught in a rip current and rapid drift.

LEADING THE WAY

More Master Scuba Divers joining the ranks this month, congratulations as always to the following for gaining their scuba 'Black Belts':



- **Hannah Smith, Colne, Lancashire**
- **Mark Williams, Newport, Gwent, Wales**

I have also been contacted by Colin and Jane Dalton, whose journey began with snorkelling excursions in Cyprus which led them to 'take the plunge' and find out about staying down a little longer!

Despite a far-less-than-perfect first boat diving experience as new Open Water Divers, which almost put them both off altogether, Colin and Jane consulted with Sinai Divers, the PADI centre in their hotel, and received a gentle, supportive approach which saw them both back in wetsuits in no time. With calm, goals-based encouragement from Penny Orford (their instructor at Sinai Divers, and now a firm friend), the Daltons had their skill sets 'ReActivated', and completed their first self-planned dive with great satisfaction. The rest, as they say, is history; as two divers who nearly called it a day, thinking that they might have bitten off more than they could chew, Colin and Jane are role models for perseverance and the value of good, quality instruction. Their PADI Specialties have included a PADI Decompression Chamber course with DES UK at Whipps Cross Hospital - described as 'a really good laugh, with poignant and relevant learning' - and their next stop is Mexico for the bull shark season in January 2016.

I love hearing stories like this; if you're a PADI Master Scuba Diver, please share yours! If you would like to know more about the PADI Master Scuba Diver programme, contact your local PADI professional, or visit PADI's website via <http://tinyurl.com/PADI-MasterDiver>

YOUNGSTER SCUBA DIVES FOR MAGICAL STONES

Binfield Primary School students needed inspiration to write a story as part of their English lessons. Crowthorne-based PADI Five Star Dive Centre Divecrew were invited to attend the school and talk about scuba diving. The subject, magical glowing stones, was so well received that a story-writing competition followed. Divecrew owner Martin Weddell attended the school with a multi-media presentation. Students were taken on a 'dry dive' of the Red Sea, seeing turtles, dolphins and rays. Martin spoke of special glowing stones that light up the reef at night. He brought a special glowing stone to the school. The story competition was won by eight year old Megan Timberlake. The prize was a special underwater experience with Divecrew, where she learnt to breathe underwater and then went scuba diving to find a 'glowing stone'. Megan's mum Karen (also a diver) said: "You (Divecrew)



obviously inspired Megan more so than we managed to as she has never been that interested in our diving stories".

Owner Martin Weddell stated: "Megan was fantastic, really relaxed in the water and did exceptionally well. Divecrew will continue to work in the community such as the work we did with Binfield Primary School". www.divecrew.co.uk

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To find out more about PADI ReActivate Touch, visit www.padi.com/reactivate or contact your local PADI Dive Center or Resort.





MY OCEAN NEWS

DOMINO ALBERT,
COMMUNICATIONS MANAGER

What better way to celebrate World Oceans Day than networking with like-minded conservationists at the Marine Litter Action Network's (MLAN) one-year anniversary event in London!

On 8 June, exactly one year after MLAN was created, I was delighted to, once again, join the Marine Conservation Society-led initiative, to reflect on what the network had achieved during its first year and discuss the way forward.

The anniversary event was an opportunity for participating members to catch up on various initiatives that emerged from working together as a network, as well as share the results of ongoing campaigns. I was particularly excited to share with the enthusiastic group of marine debris experts attending the event, the new Project AWARE Ugly Journey of Our Trash video. The animated video, released on World Oceans Day, sheds light on how litter travels from land to sea, endangering marine ecosystems and wildlife along the way. It shows how divers can help with the marine debris issue and highlights the overall complexity of the marine debris problem and the challenges involved in tackling the problem at source.

It was inspiring to see what can be achieved in one year when people with the same vision for a clean ocean share knowledge and expertise. Projects and campaigns presented at the event ranged from boardshorts using marine rubbish to the Global Ghost Gear Initiative; from campaigning to win the war on micro-plastics in personal care products to shining a light on the underwater perspective of the marine debris problem through Dive Against Debris. The progress and results of these positive initiatives truly show that we are stronger when we work together.

About the movement

Project AWARE Foundation is a growing movement of scuba divers protecting the ocean planet – one dive at a time. Over the past two decades of underwater conservation we've learned that divers are true leaders in ocean protection. We're ocean heroes numbering in the millions across the globe. We believe together our actions will make a huge impact and will help to rescue the ocean.

POWER IN NUMBERS

BY ALEXA WARD, COMMUNITY RELATIONS SPECIALIST, PROJECT AWARE FOUNDATION



Rob Thompson is first and foremost a conservationist. Intrigued by the marine world, he works fiercely to protect it. At just three years old, Rob had his first glimpse under the sea. While on holiday in Croatia, his parents strapped a mask and snorkel onto his little face and that was that – he was off! He spent the remainder of his vacation submerged, exploring among the seaweed, corals and creatures of the underwater world, and has since continued to do so at every opportunity he's been given.

As Rob grew older, he developed an interest in working to preserve the ocean environment that he loves. A frequent snorkeller and diver at home in the UK, he noticed one day that his favourite cove faced a dilemma. While one half of the seabed was clean and pristine, the other was strewn with thousands of small pieces of trash and debris. Rob found the litter issue alarming, knowing that because of it, the marine environment and its creatures were in danger. By the time he got out of the water that day, he had formed a plan to take action.

Rob contacted Project AWARE with his interest in conducting his first Dive Against Debris event. He rallied his friends and community to participate in an underwater debris removal and reporting event. The task, at first daunting, became easier as more and more volunteers joined in. The local land-owner even offered to drive in the groups' gear in his 4x4, easing the journey to the cove, which is inaccessible to the public except by foot. Working late into the day, volunteers recovered over 1,600 pieces of trash. The experience, Rob explains, was 'eye-opening'. As Rob and his friends sat around a campfire later that evening, it became clear that everyone had experienced a shift in their view of the marine debris issue. That day, they had made a difference. And now, they wanted more. The Dive Against Debris Volunteers



UK Facebook group was born.

As leader of Dive Against Debris Volunteers UK, Rob helps organise ocean activists in numerous undersea debris removal and reporting events throughout the year. In the United Kingdom, weather conditions often prove challenging – Rob and other volunteers frequently power through poor visibility, inclement weather, rip currents and tidal waves to conduct Dive Against Debris. But Rob feels that the battle is worth it to ensure that his beloved waters are clean, healthy and debris-free.

More than anything, Rob's experiences participating in Dive Against Debris have taught him that collectively, individuals working together can make an enormous positive impact for the ocean. Working alongside like-minded men and women from a variety of backgrounds, Rob has activated and inspired a coalition of divers across the country.

"It's often instinctive when faced with a task of this size – the global issue of marine debris – to think it's beyond our ability to control," Rob explains. "However, I believe if we want to see a change, it is up to us as individuals to take action. When we work together, we are strong enough to take on issues that at first seemed impossible."

Join Rob and become a debris activist with Project AWARE. Take action and Dive Against Debris. Visit: projectaware.org

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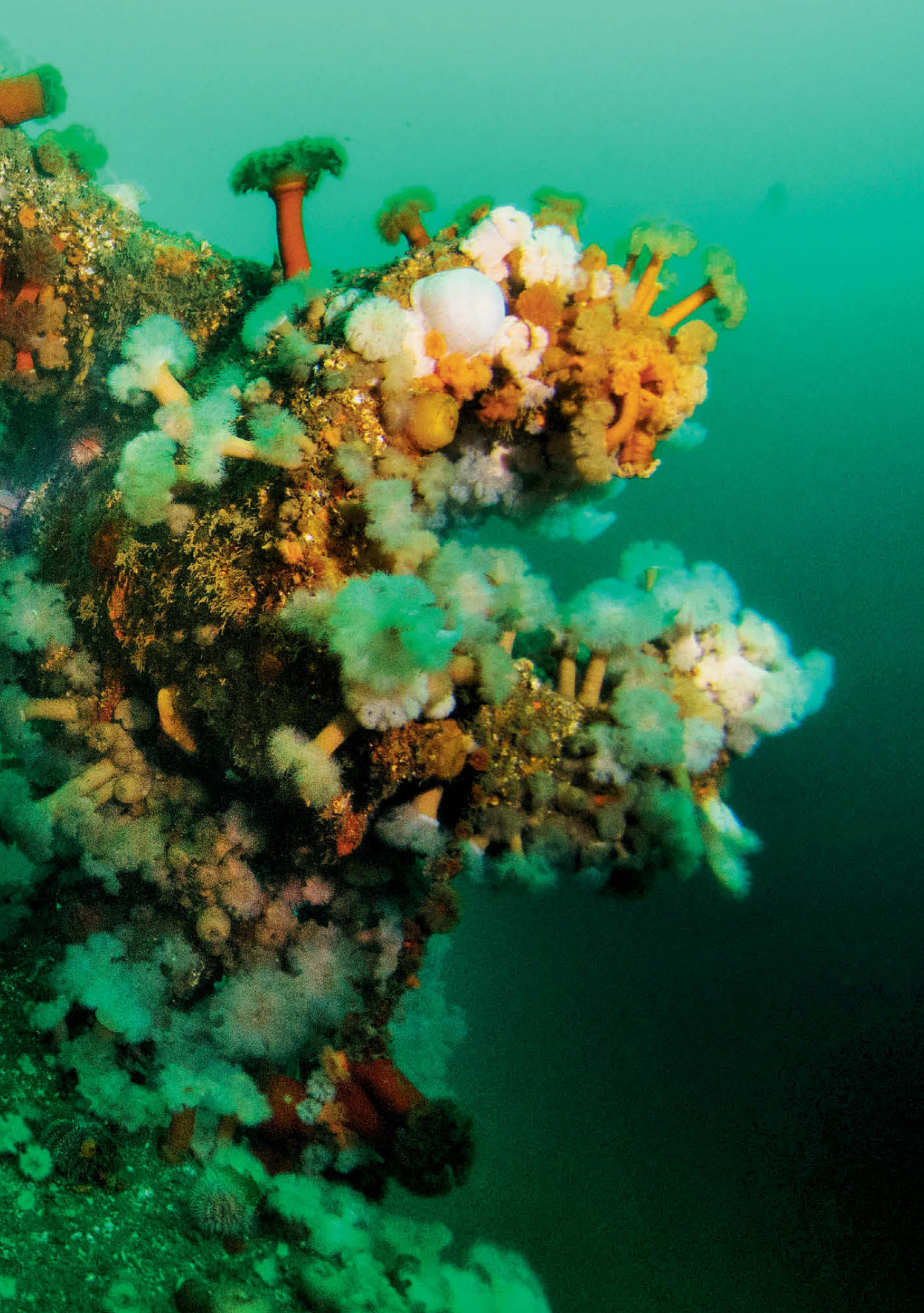


A diver in a black wetsuit and rebreather is exploring a shipwreck site. The diver is holding a large, bright light that illuminates the surrounding coral and sea anemones. The water is a deep blue-green color. The diver's rebreather is visible, and they are looking towards the camera.

Take a **BREATH**ER

MARK EVANS returns to Scapa Flow in the Orkney Islands, but this time he goes bubble-free, using a recreational rebreather to explore the German shipwrecks

Photographs by JASON BROWN/BARDO CREATIVE





The MV Huskylan

Scapa's latest arrival

The MV Huskylan is a purpose-built steel and aluminium dive boat with a square stern to maximise space for the dive deck, a handy crane to assist with loading and unloading kit, twin engines for super manoeuvrability and redundancy, a large diver lift for easy water exit, and a wet changing area fitted with drysuit hangers, and hooks for your gloves and hood. Inside, divers are treated to two metres plus of headroom throughout and what can only be described as a luxury interior, which includes massive galley - serving up delicious home-made grub between dives and on the way back to the harbour at the end of the day - and spacious dining/sitting/briefing area, plus downstairs a dry changing room complete with multiple lockers. Skipper Emily Turton's briefings are legendary, as she has an intimate knowledge of the wrecks through diving them herself extensively, and now she has added further technology that allows her to 'draw' on the ADUS 3D scans and her own sketches of the sites, which is then displayed on two large flatscreen TVs.

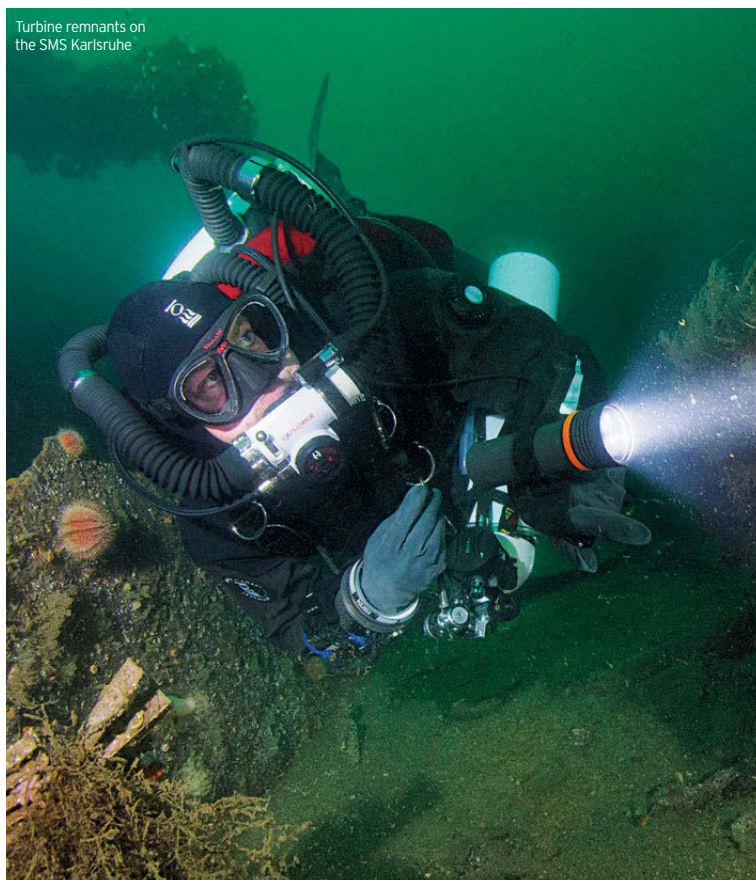
Check out the Facebook page: MV Huskylan and Divers Lodge, and visit: www.sportdiver.co.uk/huskylan for more photographs and shots of the build itself.



Mark running through his pre-dive checks on the Explorer

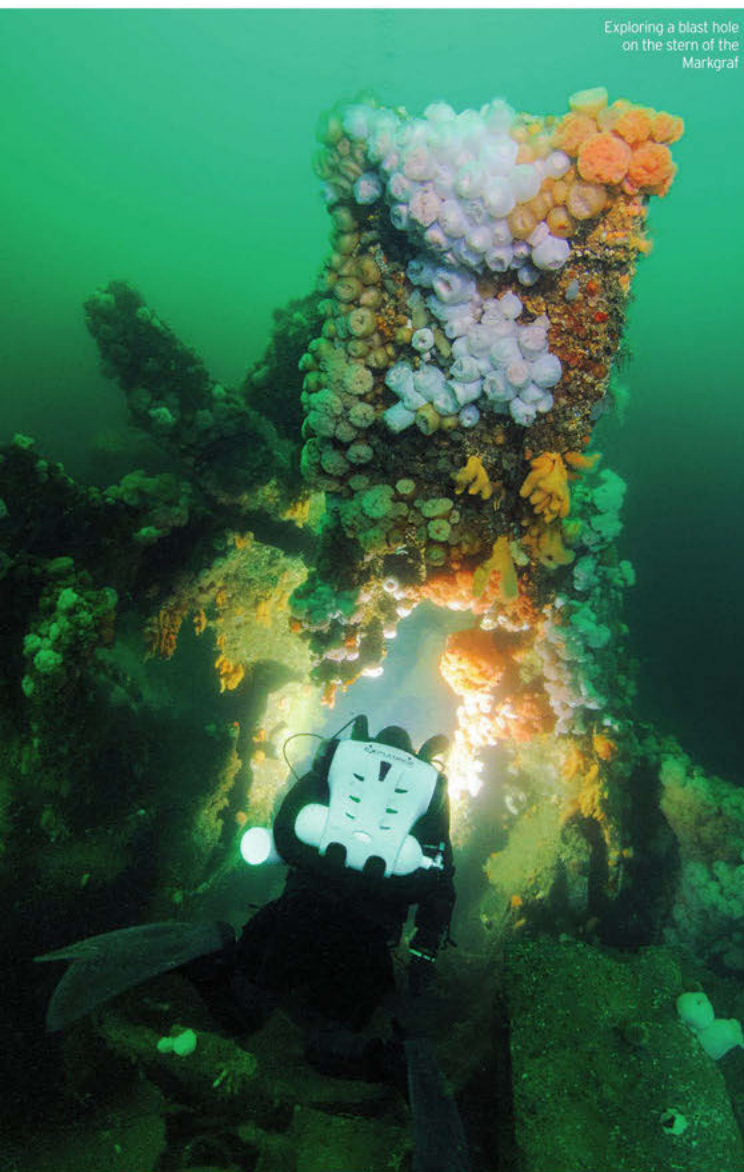


Mark and Jason about to dive the Kronprinz Wilhelm

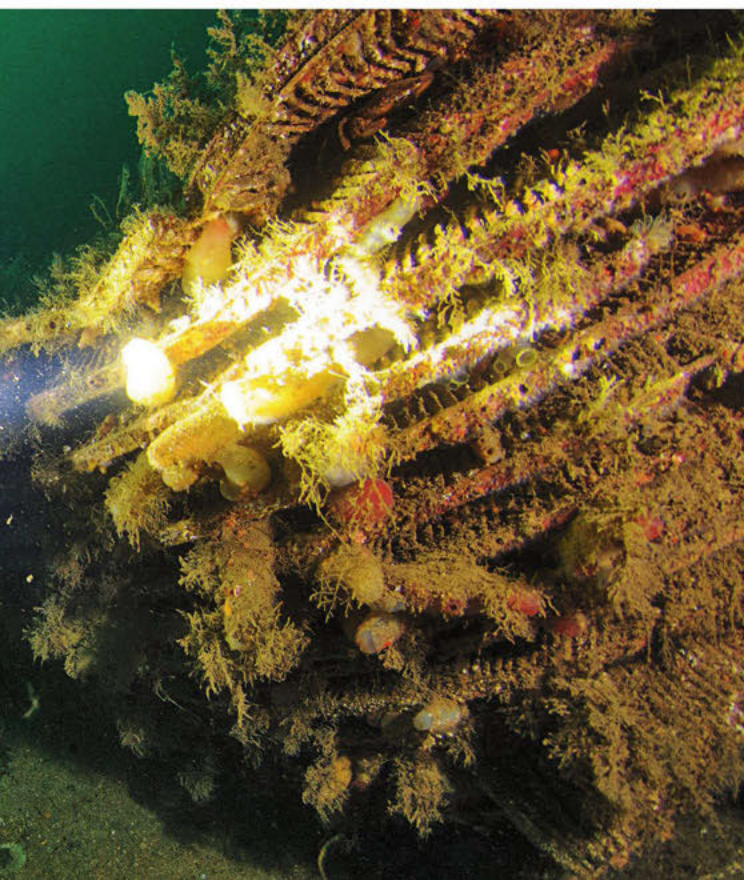


Turbine remnants on the SMS Karlsruhe

"This was probably some of the most-challenging diving that little recreational unit has been put through... and yet it never missed a beat all week"



Exploring a blast hole
on the stern of the
Markgraf



Skara Brae

Step back into history

It is not all about the diving, and as the Orkney Islands is a long haul from pretty much anywhere within the UK, it is worth checking out some of the topside attractions, including:

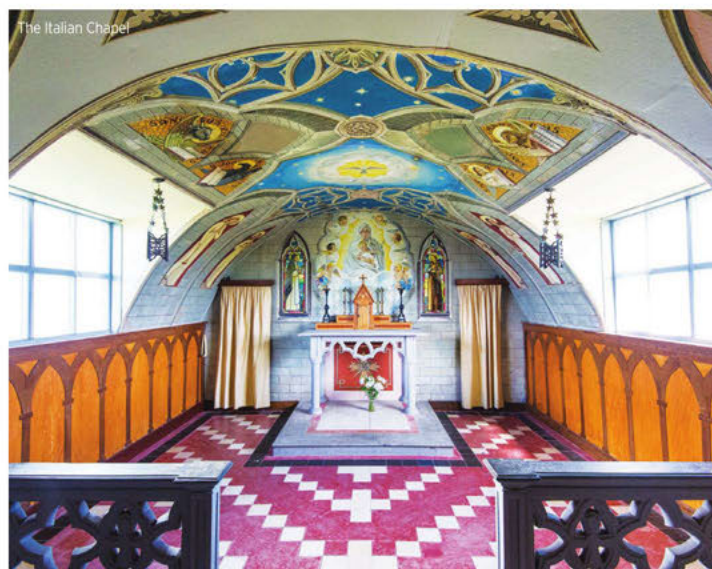
Skara Brae - Older than Stonehenge and the Great Pyramids, Europe's most-complete Neolithic village, located on the Bay of Skail, consists of eight clustered houses and was occupied from roughly 3180BC to 2500BC.

Italian Chapel - Hundreds of Italian PoWs were brought to the Orkney Islands in 1942 to work on the Churchill Barriers - four causeways created to block access to the Flow - and while they were there, they started work on a place of worship within their prison camp, namely two Nissen huts joined end-to-end. Using various scavenged materials, the prisoners transformed the huts into a highly ornate Catholic chapel, with a decorative entrance and a stunning interior, but it was not actually completed till after the end of the war.

Stones of Stenness - A Neolithic monument five miles northeast of Stromness, which may be the oldest henge site in the British Isles. Although only a handful of the original stones survive, those remaining are an impressive sight.

Ring of Brodgar - Another Neolithic henge, this one features a rare stone circle (some 104 metres in diameter) which would have had up to 60 stones, though only 27 remain.

Kitchener Memorial - On the dramatic cliffs at Marwick Head stands a lone stone tower, which was built from donations by Orkney locals in memorial of Lord Kitchener and the 654 officers and men who perished when the HMS Hampshire struck a mine and sank in stormy conditions off the coast in June 1916.



The Italian Chapel



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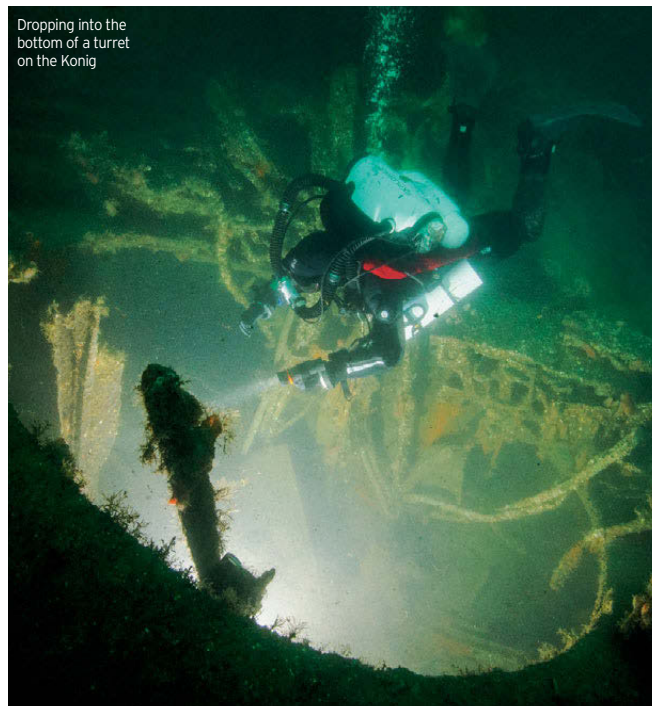


12-inch gun barrel on the Kronprinz Wilhelm battleship

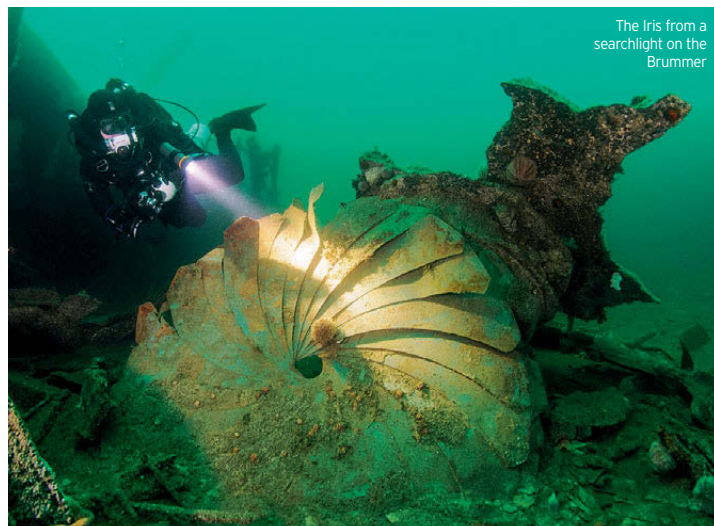
Scapa Flow is one of those few-and-far-between diving destinations that really gets into your blood and continually draws you back for more. I've made several pilgrimages up to the very northern tip of Scotland to explore this wreck-diving Mecca, which is right up there with Truk Lagoon and Bikini Atoll, thanks to the remains of monstrous German warships from World War One lying on the seabed. However, this time I was doubly excited to be returning to the Flow, as not only would I be seeing the wrecks for the first time in four years, but I'd be diving on a rebreather as well.

Technical divers have been diving the German High Seas Fleet on tech CCRs for many years, but I was going to be using our Long Term Test Hollis Explorer Sport Rebreather, a clever hybrid of a semi-closed circuit rebreather and a fully closed unit. The absolute max depth in the Flow around the wrecks is 44-45m, but most of the interesting stuff is at 37m and above, rising right up to 12-14m in some instances, so this little recreational unit promised to offer up some great diving opportunities.

And to show how a recreational rebreather can comfortably dive alongside open-circuit divers, I'd recruited photo supremo Jason Brown to accompany me, and he was going to be diving on a twinset with a stage cylinder or two. The added bonus was that while he is a veteran UK diver, Jason had never been to Scapa, and you will be able to read about his experiences ticking this off his 'bucket list' in a future issue.



Dropping into the bottom of a turret on the Konig



The Iris from a searchlight on the Brummer

Northlink Ferries

Getting to the Orkney Islands will generally involve a ferry journey, unless you decide to fly, and that can get prohibitively expensive with heavy dive kit. You can either drive all the way up to Scrabster on the very northern tip of Scotland and take the relatively short ferry trip across to Stromness, or you can opt for the route I now generally go for - a six-hour ferry voyage from Aberdeen to Kirkwall.

The roads to Aberdeen are virtually all motorways or dual carriageways wherever you are travelling from in the UK, so getting there is relatively painless, and once you are on the ferry, you can relax during the journey with a meal in the restaurant, or even take in a movie in the on-board cinema! Coming home I highly recommend getting a cabin, as then you get a solid few hours of sleep on the overnight voyage and can start your drive home the following day feeling somewhat refreshed.

Prices range from £244 return for two people plus a vehicle, and £73 for a twin cabin, in low season, to £348 return for two people plus a vehicle, and £111 for a twin cabin, in peak season.

www.northlinkferries.co.uk

The remains of a rangefinder on the Coln - German optics were far superior to ours



"On all but one of the dives it slipped into decompression, and the handset clearly showed me how long it wanted me to stop and at what depth"

BLESSED BY THE WEATHER GODS

The thing with the Orkney Islands is that they are open to the elements, and so they can get hammered by the weather. On the plus side, the British Navy chose Scapa Flow as a safe anchorage because it is quite well sheltered considering its location. We were lucky - initial forecasts seemed to indicate increasingly strong winds over the week, but in the end, apart from the odd blustery and showery day, we were largely rewarded by blue skies and reasonably calm seas.

We had a mixed group of CCR, twinset and single-cylinder divers on board, and all agreed that they wanted to concentrate on the seven German warships - the battleships Markgraf, Konig and Kronprinz Wilhelm, the cruisers Dresden, Coln and Karlsruhe, and the mine-layer Brummer. Although this meant missing out on diving the purpose-sunk blockships, or the World War Two vessel F2, it is the best way to get the most out of the 'main event' - with two dives a day for six days, it enables you to get two 'hits' on most of the German wrecks and really get a feel for them.

KID WITH A NEW TOY

Although I had logged nearly 20 dives on the Explorer, this was going to represent my first full-on week of diving on it. The sense of anticipation as I ran through all the pre-dive checks on the MV Huskyn that first morning was palpable, and as I made that initial giant-stride into the green waters of Scapa Flow, for a minute I had that same feeling of exhilaration that I felt all those years ago when I dived these fabled wrecks for the very first time.

I normally plummet into the depths in a head-down skydive position, but the Explorer gets quite hard to breathe in this orientation when you are dropping fast, so I soon learned to adjust my body into a slightly head-up position and then it was a lot less effort on the descent.

Once on the wrecks, the Explorer was a dream to dive. Its small size meant that I had no problem squeezing into some of the tight spaces that Jason indicated so that he could get a photograph, and when posing for images in open water alongside the wrecks, it didn't take me long to master minor buoyancy changes to get into just the right spot. The great thing about a rebreather is, once you have attained neutral buoyancy at a set depth, you do not move at all when you breathe in and out, which is fantastic when you are hanging next to a gun or a windlass in the perfect location while your photographer buddy is shooting seemingly endless images!

The German shipwrecks offer a multitude of subjects for avid photographers, from the main gun turrets and deck guns to conning towers, windlasses, anchors, torpedoes and, of course, the actual vessel's themselves, particularly bows and sterns.

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“...to say that the ships have been lying on the bottom of Scapa Flow for 96 years, they are still holding together remarkably well in the main”

Although I was kept busy by Jason scouting out shoot locations and modelling for photographs, I was still able to enjoy exploring the High Seas Fleet once again, though I did notice some major changes to certain wrecks. The cruiser Dresden, for instance, offers a whole new dive experience around the bow section, as a huge area of the decking is peeling away and is now almost down to seabed level, revealing previously unseen rooms, passageways and ladders. The mine-layer Brummer is fairing even worse, with various areas now becoming increasingly unstable. At the bow, huge sections of the forward hull have now rusted away, leaving just the scythe-like bow intact.

Having said that, to say that the ships have been lying on the bottom of Scapa Flow for 96 years, they are still holding together remarkably well in the main. Yes, the Dresden, and the Brummer in particular, are slowly succumbing, but the Coln still looked pretty much the same as when I last dived her four years ago, and I even got to see some stuff I'd never spotted before thanks to skipper Emily's ultra-detailed briefings. Elsewhere, things were also much the same - dropping to 37m on the Kronprinz Wilhelm and venturing beneath her vast hull to see the barrels of her main gun turrets, I had a serious case of déjà vu, the scene was so familiar. Long-time Scapa divers will still find much to keep them entertained, and the slow decline of the shipwrecks is continually opening up new areas for exploration, while Scapa virgins will just be blown away by the sheer size of the vessels.

CONCLUSION

So how did the Hollis Explorer fair diving the German High Seas Fleet in Scapa Flow? Well, I have to say, I was impressed. This was probably some of the most-challenging diving that little recreational unit has been put through - and I mean that in respect to the depths and relative lack of superstructure to multi-level up on, rather than how hard the actual diving is - and yet it never missed a beat all week.

Though the battery in the LSU, which houses all the brains of the rebreather, can easily handle multiple days of diving, I popped it on charge

every night just to play safe. I also had the cylinder filled after every dive, and changed out the sofnalime in the scrubber at the same time too, and this proved to be a simple and efficient procedure, taking no longer than ten minutes or so to reassemble the unit and run through all the pre-dive checks so that while I enjoyed my lunch and a cup of coffee, the Explorer could sit there with the HUD glowing a soothing green ready to dive in the afternoon.

Only once did we have an issue, and that was entirely user-error, not the machine. I had previously been using 36-40 percent nitrox in the drive cylinder, and then was changing it to 32 percent to get a deeper MoD for a battleship dive. During the pre-dive check, it kept failing on the gas analysis, and after three attempts Jason got our guardian angel on the phone - Vobster's Tim Clements. Tim was the man who first qualified me on the unit a few years back, and he is an instructor trainer with an intimate knowledge of the Explorer. A quick explanation of what was happening and he deduced where we'd gone wrong - as a safety feature, the Explorer will not allow you to use a gas mix that is more than five percent different to whatever the default gas setting is, and a check of the handset revealed mine was set at 40 percent. I swiftly dropped this to 32 percent, re-ran the pre-dive checks and it flew through them with no problems. Lesson learned, I then routinely set the default gas to whatever mix I was going to be diving, or wherever the five percent rule would not apply.

When I say I pushed the unit to its limits, I really meant it. On all but one of the dives it slipped into decompression, and the handset clearly showed me how long it wanted me to stop and at what depth. Just like on a multi-level open-circuit dive, the time of this deco stop was eaten away during a slow ascent up the shotline, and the longest I ever had to remain at 3m was seven minutes. Now I am not advocating that all Explorer users start routinely putting their units into decompression - I had a six-litre stage cylinder, and Jason was equipped with a twinset and two stages, so we had plenty of gas for whatever situation reared its ugly head - but it is reassuring to know that if you do happen to find yourself on the brink or just at that tipping point, it will safely see you to the surface. ■



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MORE AND BETTER

Simple strategies for making the most of every dive at Wakatobi

With more than 40 dive sites spread across a 20km section of protected reef, plus a 5km expanse of the House Reef lying just off the resort's beach, Wakatobi offers more opportunities for underwater exploration than one could possibly experience in a single dive holiday. That said, there are several simple strategies that divers can use to increase bottom time

safely, dive with less effort, and take in more of the underwater world. Follow these suggestions and you can make the most of every diving day.

The number one way to increase the duration of a dive is to take advantage of the extended times made possible by multi-level dive profiles. Few places in the world are as well-suited for multi-level profiles as Wakatobi, where reefs often rise to within a metre or two of the surface, then drop steeply or even vertically to depths of 40m and beyond. Computer-equipped divers can take advantage of this

favourable topography to create profiles that stretch well beyond the hour mark. Even better, they will have something interesting to view throughout the dive, because what would be considered a dive-ending safety stop in other parts of the world can be transformed into an extended tour of the reef crest.

Another favourite tactic for both reducing air consumption and at the same time covering more ground is to let the water do the work. A number of Wakatobi's best dives don't begin and end at a stationary

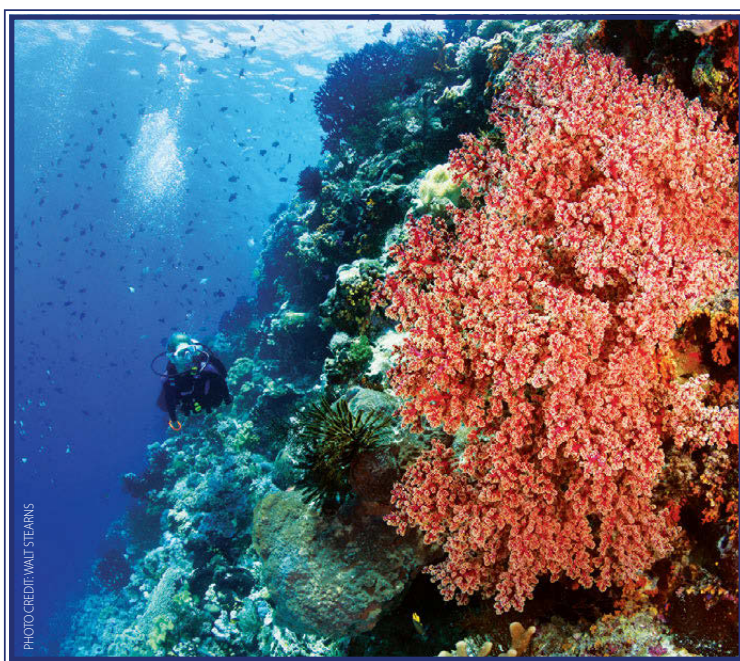
mooring, and are instead conducted as drift dives. As anyone who has performed a properly-executed drift dive knows, it can be a very rewarding experience. There's no need to navigate back to the starting point, or to swim against a current; you simply step overboard and allow the moving water to propel you along the reef while you relax and breathe easy. Depending on conditions, this could involve a relax-

ing and leisurely float, or an exhilarating underwater flight. Either way, when you perform a drift at Wakatobi, you will be in the company of an attentive and knowledgeable guide, and at the end of the dive, the boat will be right there waiting when you surface.

With morning, mid-morning and afternoon boat departures, divers can easily rack up three or more hours of daily water time at Wakatobi. And for even more, you can go from shore. The resort's House Reef is known as one of the world's best shore dives, and you can access this legendary strip of underwater real estate right from the beach or the jetty. For

an experience halfway between a shore and boat dive, guests can also engage the surfaces of Wakatobi's taxi boats. These small launches will ferry divers to more distant areas of the House Reef, where they can either drift back to the resort or arrange for a pick-up at the end of the dive. Shore diving - or snorkelling - is a favourite way to spend afternoons, and since there's plenty to see at shallow depths, these dives don't add significantly to a diver's nitrogen load.

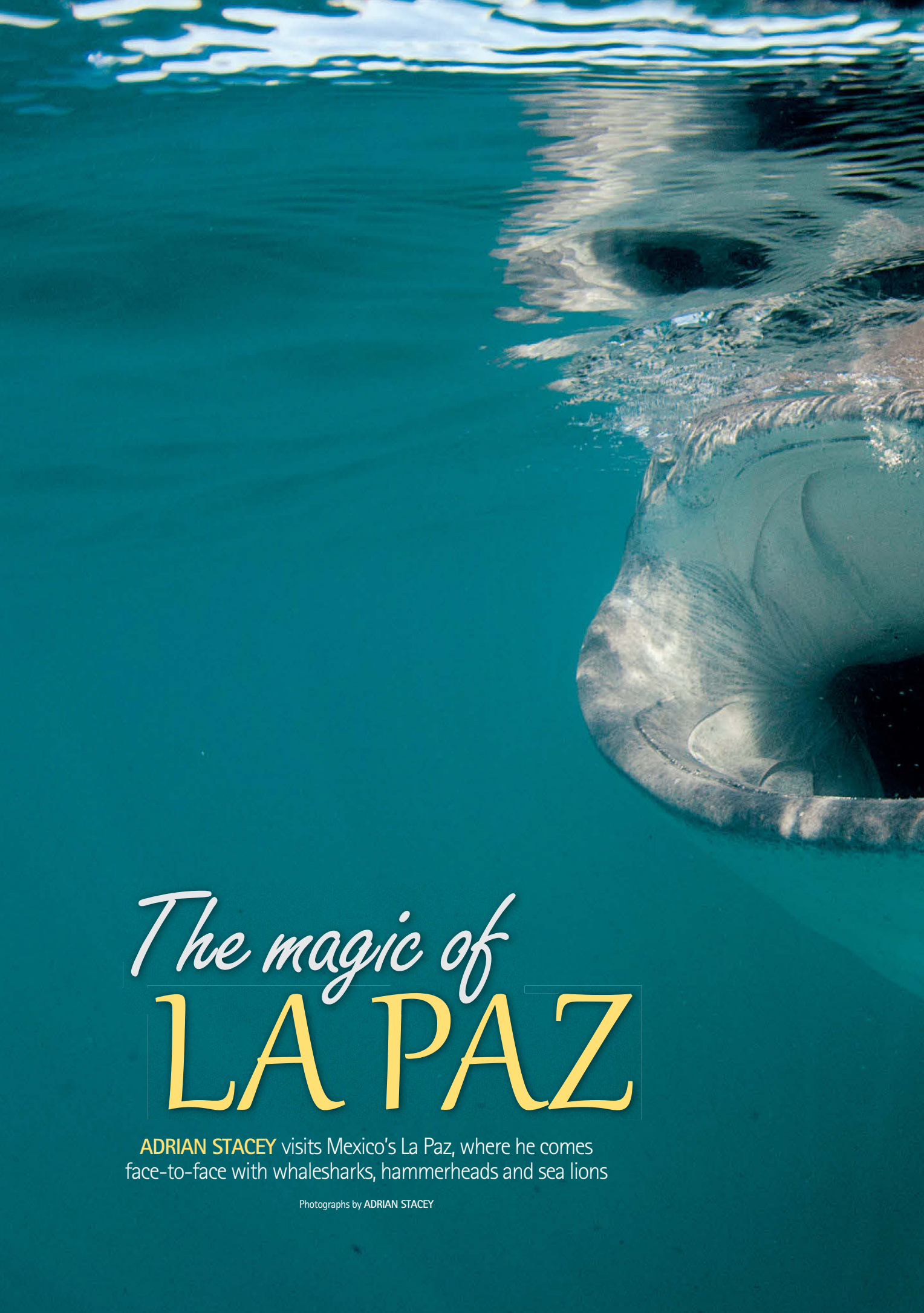
At Wakatobi, the diving day doesn't have to end when the sun goes





down, and in fact some of the most-interesting dives in the area take place under cover of darkness. At night, the reefs become even more active as animals that lay dormant or hidden through the daylight hours emerge to feed or hunt. Under the cover of night, octopus, squid and eels slip from hidden crevices, scorpionfish become more active, and flatworms exit burrows to feed. Guides are always available to help light the way, but divers are also welcome to explore the house reef on their own.

However you choose to explore Wakatobi's reefs - shallow or deep, day or night, staying put or drifting along - the one thing that is certain with any visit is that you won't run out of things to see or do. And perhaps that's why so many of our guests keep coming back for more, making a return visit to Wakatobi one of their most-enjoyable habits. ■

An underwater photograph showing the head of a whale shark on the right side of the frame. The shark's eye is visible, and its skin has a mottled pattern. The water is a deep teal color. The title text is overlaid on the bottom left of the image.

The magic of **LA PAZ**

ADRIAN STACEY visits Mexico's La Paz, where he comes face-to-face with whalesharks, hammerheads and sea lions

Photographs by ADRIAN STACEY



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Rival starfish compete on the reef



Sea lions pose for the camera



Topside scenery is dramatic



Dive boat awaiting returning divers

Cortez Club

The Cortez Club is situated about a five-minute drive from the Malecon, the main tourist area of La Paz. They offer free transfers from hotels in the area to their dive centre, which is located on the shores of the Sea of Cortez. They have a private jetty from where you are taken out to the numerous dive sites. The staff are extremely friendly and the place has a relaxed atmosphere.

www.cortezclub.com / info@cortezclub.com

"All of a sudden, our guide pointed to something in the distance below us. A procession of up to a hundred of these elusive sharks glided silently past, fading in and out of our sight like ghostly apparitions"

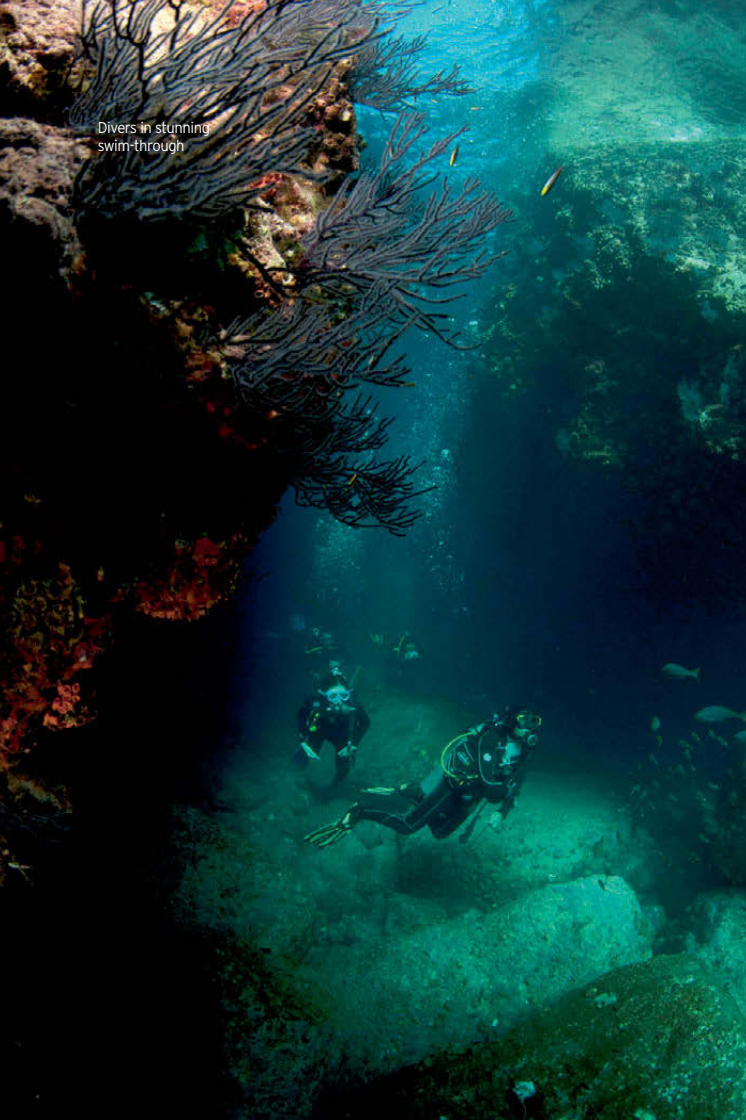
La Paz is perhaps best known in the diving community for its sea lions. A large colony of more than 400 of these magnificent animals inhabits the little island of Los Islotes. A second smaller colony numbering 30 or 40 has taken up residence at a reef called San Rafaelito, a few miles to the south. La Paz, though, has a lot more to offer than just sea lions.

This is the capital city of the Baja California Sur Peninsular, with a population of around 250,000. It has the feel of a relaxed seaside town. The Malecon is the area where most people gravitate towards. It is busy both day and night with families, skateboarders, cyclists and tourists all ambling around the wide promenade that stretches for miles. The ocean is on one side of the street and on the other ice cream parlours do business alongside taco shops, restaurants and numerous bars. This is a great place to look at the sun set and to watch the world go by.

La Paz is located on the shores of the Sea of Cortez in a huge bay. This is where my three-day excursion began; dare I say snorkelling with whalesharks. Snorkelling is like blasphemy to some diehard divers, but for a photographer swapping a tank for a snorkel can have its advantages. The first and perhaps most-important one is that you are not actually allowed to dive with the whalesharks here so you either snorkel or stay on the boat! Another benefit is that you are more mobile and as you are shallow there is no need for strobes that can irritate and even scare the shark away. October marks the beginning of the whaleshark season. They are attracted to the area by the plankton that collects here in the

relatively shallow bay of La Paz. Sometimes they cruise slowly through the water, mouths open. Other times they remain almost motionless, gulping huge mouthfuls of water from the surface. After several hours of jumping in and out of our boat to go swimming with these impressive creatures, we returned to the shore. On the way we encountered the resident pod of dolphins that have been known to bully the whalesharks from time to time, repeatedly ramming them and chasing the gentle giants out of their territory.

Most of the dive sites are around or in the close vicinity of Isla Espiritu Santo, a large and picturesque island just outside the bay. Our first destination was El Bajo, an undersea mount that climbs to around 16m of the surface. Large schools of yellowtail surgeonfish and anthias congregate around the rocky formation and moray eels can be found hiding in any number of crevasses. The dive site is very pleasant, but the main reason for coming here is to find hammerhead sharks. After spending 15 minutes or so on the reef we ventured out into the blue. The water was actually more green than blue, but this was actually a good sign as the sharks seem to prefer these sorts of lower visibility conditions. After around 30 minutes of straining my eyes, the excitement and anticipation began to wear off and my enthusiasm started to wane. All of a sudden, our guide pointed to something in the distance below us. I finned furiously to where she was gesticulating. I saw the sentinel hammerhead first. Then in the murky depths a procession of up to 100 of these elusive sharks glided silently past, fading in and out of our sight like ghostly apparitions. It was



Divers in stunning swim-through

The next day it was time for the main event and we visited the sea lions of Los Islotes. Hundreds of them were sprawled over the rocks, the air pungent with their smell. Many more were in the water playing with snorkellers at the surface and interacting with the diver's beneath it. Even without the sea lions, this would be a very nice dive site. Big schools of fish hang in the blue just off the island's jagged shore. A large fissure cuts through the rocks of one of the islets, creating an impressive coral-covered underwater canyon. Huge boulders create an interesting topography, a playground that the sea lion pups revel in. The large bulls lurk in the background close to shore. They keep a watchful eye on the younger members of the colony, who are only too happy to show off in front of us. It is quite a spectacle and one of the most-interactive experiences you will find diving. The best time of year to visit if you want to have your fins nibbled and your limbs gently bitten is October/November. This is when they are most playful, energetic and inquisitive. La Paz is reputedly one of the best places in the world to dive with sea lions and it is easy to see why.

There are three wrecks around Isla Espiritu Santo. The Fan Ming is a Chinese freighter that was sunk in 1999 to form an artificial reef, the C59 a former Mexican Navy vessel which was also purposely sunk, and the La Salvatierra. My final dive was at the wreck of the La Salvatierra, a cargo ferry that hit the reef and sank in 1976. This is the oldest of the three wrecks but, unlike the other two, it is not possible to penetrate the impressive vessel. Fortunately, the battered and rusting structure has been colonised by an impressive amount of coral and has attracted huge amounts of fish. The La Salvatierra sits at a depth of around 20m, the top of it around 12-15m. All around the wreckage are the remains of the trucks it was transporting. The most-prominent feature are the axles and wheels, still inflated, sporting tufts of black coral and hiding all manner of marine life. At the stern, the twin propellers are exposed, home to a large school of grey bar grunts. In fact, everywhere I looked there were schooling fish of various types: grunts, snapper, triggerfish, goatfish and even large numbers of pufferfish grouped together.

The diving in La Paz is year round, July to November offering the best visibility (up to 25 metres) and the warmest waters (around 28 degrees Celsius). September to November is reportedly the best time for whale-sharks and also when the sea lions are at their best. From December to April the northerly winds pick up, making some areas inaccessible at times. The dive sites can take from anywhere between 30 minutes to two hours to get to, but are usually worth the journey. La Paz has a great deal to offer: whalesharks, hammerheads, wrecks, huge schools of fish and, of course, playful sea lions. Diving with sea lions should be on everyone's 'must do' list of diving experiences and I don't think there are many better places to do it than La Paz. This really is a destination not to be missed. ■

a very good start to the weekend's diving.

Next on the agenda was the small sea lion colony at San Rafaelito. The reef sits at the mouth of the La Paz Bay and pokes a metre or so from the surface, a small lighthouse warning ships of its presence. This colony consists more of adults who perhaps want to get some peace and quiet away from the boisterous pups of Los Islotes. When we arrived at the site, a large raft of them was floating in the water, fins extended upwards catching the sun. In the shallow waters near the reef's summit, hard corals encrust almost every stone. An immense bait ball blanketed a large portion of the site, constantly agitated by raiding parties of jacks, machetes and cormorants. Even the sea lions joined in once they had finished sunbathing.

WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

LA PAZ, MEXICO



WHERE IS IT

La Paz is situated on the Sea of Cortez, Baja California Peninsula, Mexico.

HOW TO GET THERE

The closest airport is La Paz Airport. There are no direct flights from Europe, but there are regular flights from the US and Mexico City.

WHEN TO VISIT

The diving in La Paz is year round. From December to April the northerly winds pick up, making some areas inaccessible at times. October and November are the best months to play with the sea lion pups and when the whalesharks start to arrive.

ENTRY REQUIREMENTS

Visas are not required for UK passport holders staying for up to 180 days.

CURRENCY

Mexican Peso (£1 = 21MXN). US dollars are also accepted in most places.

WHERE TO EAT AND MEET

Take your pick from one of the many bars and restaurants and taco shops along the Malecon.

VERDICT

Wrecks, hammerheads, whalesharks and sea lions. . . Three days was definitely not enough!

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STAR LETTER

Thanks for the tip

Just a quickie to say thanks for the tip, Sport Diver!

I have been a regular reader of the magazine for a couple of years now and have kept up my subscription mostly for the holiday pieces - a large proportion of my recent trips (all of them diving, of course) have been to destinations and resorts that you have covered/showcased in your pages. So thanks for that.

But that's not why I'm writing...

Those tips were great, but truth be told it's hard to go wrong with a dive holiday to a gorgeous country with lovely beaches and colourful reefs. Dive kit on the other hand...

I was in the market for a new regulator. While my old one

was still working ok, it was banged-up pretty good and was only suitable for warm-water diving. Keen to try some UK sites, I thought it was time to up the stakes and go big. The lowdown on top-of-the-range regs in the July issue was great and really helpful. Impartial advice is hard to come by! I plumped for the Apeks XTX200, which won the Choice Award. On the three (!) dives I've done so far it has been super! Cheers.

Alan Hudson, via email



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Healthy UK scene

I was at Stoney Cove this last Tuesday and witnessed a great scene - a car park full of divers busily pulling gear from the boots of their cars, chatting with neighbours and heading to and from the water. Yes, the weather was gorgeous, which would have accounted for a few extra bodies, but even so, for a Tuesday it was MAD BUSY! Among the crowd were five or six pupils from a local sixth form, an elderly couple who had clearly been diving together for years and a family of three - mum, dad and their teenage daughter who was a little new to the sport. With packed-lunches and baps outside Nemo's enjoyed between dives, everyone was in a good place. The water was clear as well. It was a healthy UK scene! Thought you'd like to know.

Sarah Greaves, via email

Twinset in their ways

Diving is supposed to be an inclusive pastime, right? One of the big attractions when you're learning is the community spirit of it, especially if you learn in a club environment. Even if you don't, the camaraderie on a buddy-to-buddy level is great. I loved it straight away. Since I bought all my own gear, I have always dived on a twinset, regardless of dive profile. I feel safer with the extra gas and don't mind taking the extra load topside. This was fine to start with, but I have noticed recently an increase in baffled folk and, even more annoying, people trying to sway me off my set-up. Mostly it's people telling me to go sidemount, though sometimes CCRs and 'you only need a single' are mentioned too. Here's my message: I like diving on twins. Leave me be. It makes no difference to you!

Jess Slessor, via email

Bad ad

I was watching TV the other day and an advert came on featuring divers. It was an ad for the Lottery basically telling people to buy a ticket and fulfil all these lifelong dreams once they've won - diving was one of them, and fair enough, it is pricey! Anyways, it made me chuckle because the footage was so awful. Two divers swimming along in beautiful blue shallows. Fair enough, that sounds nice. But the clip was so washed out and 'cyan-y' it looked rubbish. Not only that, you could barely make out the divers there were so many bubbles in the way. Clearly the advert hadn't been put together by a diver. I'm presuming they didn't even consult with a diver to make sure the clip was a good one. I find the whole thing puzzling. Bizarre, don't you think?

Stephen Beck, via email

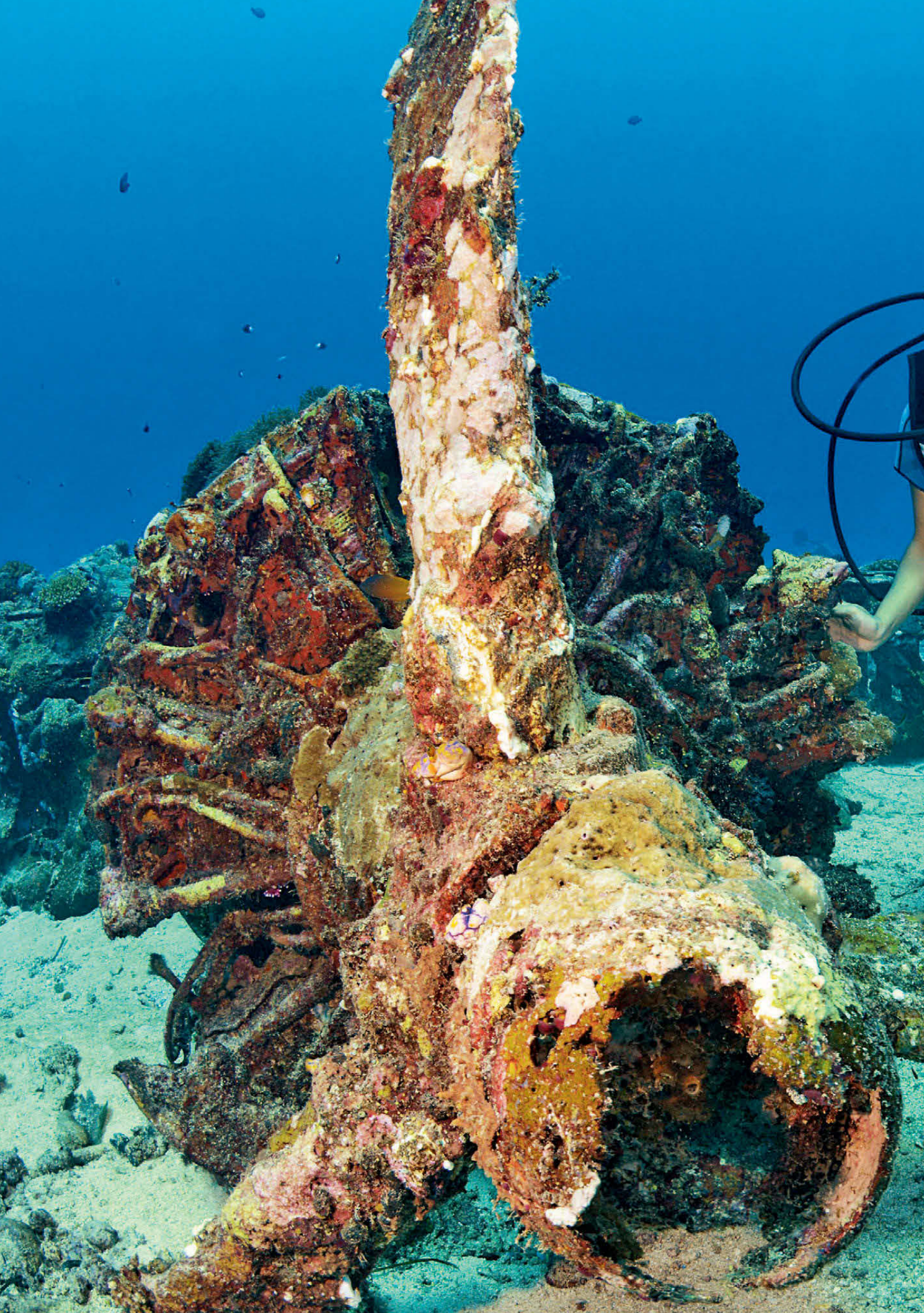


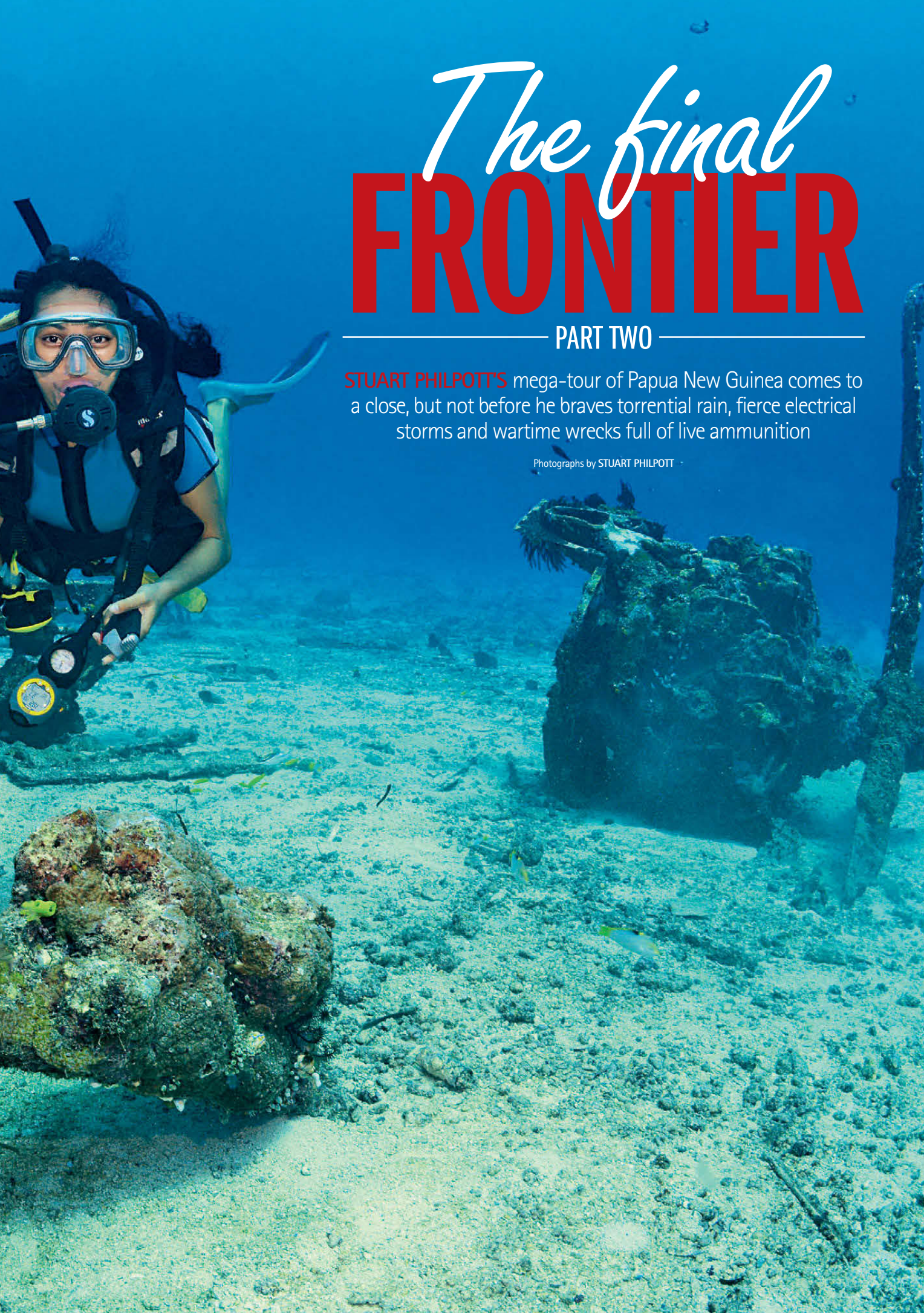
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The final **FRONTIER**

PART TWO

STUART PHILPOTT'S mega-tour of Papua New Guinea comes to a close, but not before he braves torrential rain, fierce electrical storms and wartime wrecks full of live ammunition

Photographs by STUART PHILPOTT

Arriving at Jackson's Airport, Port Moresby, I had a distinct feeling of déjà vu. Even the security staff tipped me a recognising nod as I walked towards the check-in desk for the third time in a matter of days. I had reached the halfway stage of my epic 20-day Papua New Guinea tour, which had already, in no uncertain terms, been eventful. But the curse of the sacred squashed pig hadn't quelled my enthusiasm. In true Indiana Jones style, I was having the adventure of a lifetime. My next stop was Lissenung Island in Kavieng, which required yet another plane, bus and boat transfer. Well known tour operator Dive Worldwide had done a great job with my itinerary, especially considering the amount of flights and transfers involved. In all I only had one flight delay and there was always someone waiting to collect me from the airport.

A happy smiling Victoria greeted me at the jetty in Kavieng. We cruised past several idyllic palm-fringed islands during the 20-minute boat journey. Lissenung Island turned out to be a slightly bigger version of the aforementioned, roughly 500 metres in diameter (about four football pitches), densely covered in trees and bushes with pockets of white sandy beach all surrounded by coral reef, so not a bad chill out spot for the next five days (for those that wanted even more seclusion, it is possible to hire out Ral island for the afternoon plus picnic and a bottle of wine or two).

Kavieng pioneers Austrian Dietmar Amon and his Aussie partner Ange opened the small privately-owned dive resort in 1996 with just four rooms and shared bathrooms. This has now grown to encompass some seven rooms with en-suites (maximum 14 guests at any time) on a number of secluded plots. Dietmar said ten guests is a good number. He assured me that they had no more plans for expansion. There would just be improvements to the existing facilities. It's worth mentioning that a number of the chalets are semi-detached and with paper-thin walls I could hear just about everything my amorous neighbours were saying or doing! Dietmar said the resort is busy all year round, with the overall visitor rate still on the increase. November-December is the best time to stay.

The dive centre offers 40 regular dive sites. Dietmar's favourite was Albatross Passage and his best scenic wreck the deep Pete seaplane. He said: "These days I'm too busy to dive, I do maybe 50 dives a year". He has logged more than 5,000 dives around Kavieng, so it's fair to say he knows the area pretty well. It was good to hear that there were no inshore fisheries or factory ships operating in the area, only local fishing. Dietmar said: "The diversity of marine life is amazing. We are in the Coral Triangle with the highest number of species. Kavieng has big and small stuff as well as wrecks."



Beach hut
accommodation



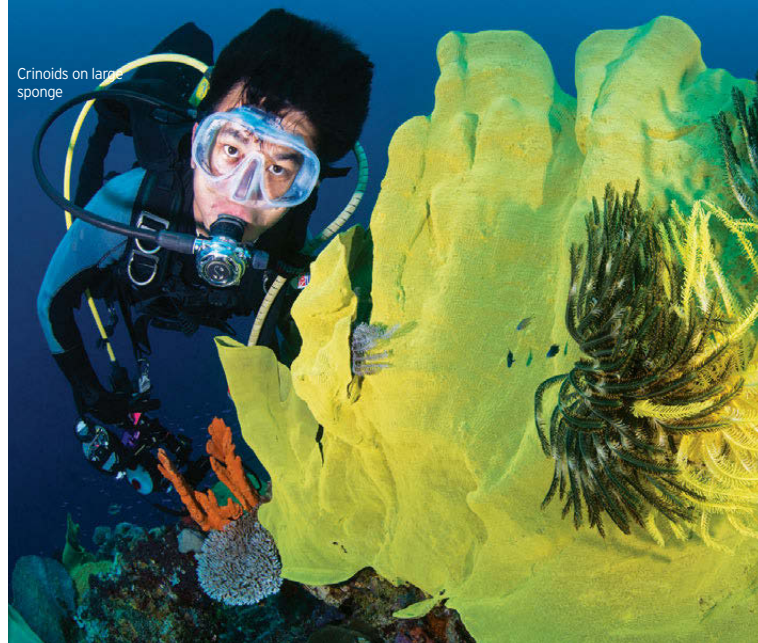
Dive boat on the beach



Freediving in the
shallows



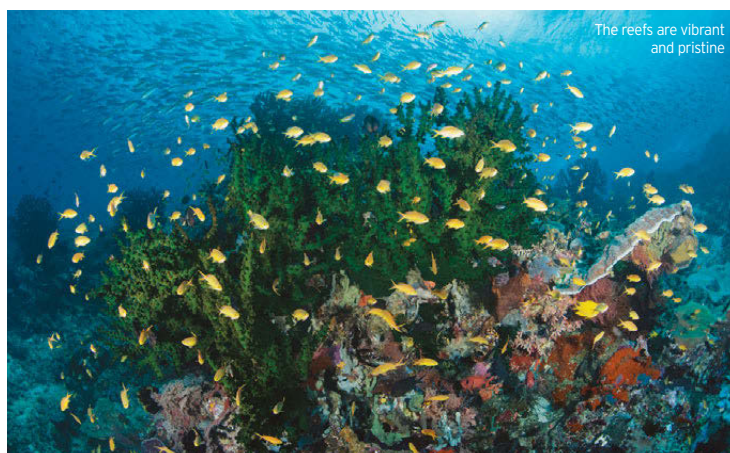
Divers with shipwreck



Crinoids on large sponge



Diver checks out a large pufferfish



The reefs are vibrant and pristine

"The strong 'in' current had attracted at least ten reef sharks, huge shoals of barracuda, snapper, jacks and sweetlips as well as passing tuna, king mackerel, dolphin and turtle. It felt like anything could turn up at any time"

A lively group of Aussie divers were already on the island. They turned out to be a really sociable bunch and were more than happy for me to join in. I had about an hour to grab a bite to eat and prepare my camera for the 3pm afternoon dive, which happened to be Dietmar's number one site, Albatross Passage. I followed Japanese dive guide and part-time head chef Nokozaki along the near-vertical wall until we reached a 'corner' where all the marine life seemed to converge. This dive site must rank in the world's top 100. The strong 'in' current had attracted at least ten reef sharks, huge shoals of barracuda, snapper, jacks and sweetlips as well as passing tuna, king mackerel, dolphin and turtle. It felt like anything could turn up at any time. Divers are encouraged to hold on to the top of the rocky precipice at a depth of 10m and watch the spectacular action unfolding below. I ducked underneath the wall and got right into the thick of it. The reef sharks came within an arm's-length of my dome port without the lure of bait. I came back to the site on an 'out' current and visibility was not as good and neither was the marine life, although I did encounter a roving shoal of about 1,000 batfish, which is the biggest I have seen to date.

There were so many marine life sighting 'firsts' during my stay at Lissanung Island. One morning we had a pod of around 50 false killer whales riding our bow wave. On the way to another site I saw huge king mackerel leaping four or five metres into the air. Nokozaki used a magnifying glass to show me my first-ever pygmy seahorse, which was no bigger than my little fingernail. Trying to take in-focus photos with a 60mm lens was quite interesting to say the least!

Kavieng also had a good variety of World War Two shipwrecks to complement the thriving coral reefs. This included a number of American and Japanese warplanes. Conditions on the B25 bomber nicknamed 'Stubborn Hellion' were not the best, but then again, it was located inshore very close to the mangroves. Nokozaki said the crew had died when the plane ditched into the sea. I tried to get some pictures of the control column inside the cockpit but the silty conditions were far too severe. I had much better luck on the Nakajima Kate torpedo bomber sitting upright and completely intact (bar tail section) at a maximum depth of 12m. There was even a bomb still attached to the wing. Victoria posed by the propeller and the open cockpit full of glassfish. The clear blue conditions on the PBY Catalina flying boat made my job much easier. I found an artillery gun and boxes of live ammunition lying among the wreckage. The main features included engines, props and wing sections but there was so much more scattered around the debris field, including instrument gauges and more guns and ammunition. Just to finish off a great day's wreck diving, we caught sight of a dugong.

Der Yang was a great 'combo' dive beginning with the exploration of an old Vietnamese fishing trawler lying on its side at a depth of 32m, followed by a thriving coral reef rising to within 10m of the surface. Reef sharks, turtles and a huge shoal of circling barracuda were just a few of the big fish highlights. Back inside the bay, dive guide Tamy gave me a tour of the Tenye Maru. This was full of lionfish, grouper and smaller marine life. Even though the wreck was well broken up, I found brass portholes and some personal memorabilia. The bow hold was piled high with live artillery shells.

I really didn't want to leave Lissenung Island; there were still far too many unexplored dive sites to visit and way too many unexploited picture opportunities. I also wasn't keen on getting up at 4am in the morning to catch the flight back to Port Moresby. The transfer vessel was no bigger than a rowing boat with a small put-put outboard, so not the most stable platform for carrying me and all my camera gear. This was one of the most-frightening and exhilarating moments of my trip. A massive electrical storm was in full patter overhead. Apart from sporadic lightning bolts, it was absolutely pitch black, I had no idea how the boat driver navigated us back to the jetty in one piece.

Tawali resort at Milne Bay was my last stop. I didn't get to meet the owners, but I did get to chat with the resort manager, Noel Ingles. Tawali opened in 2004. The resort offers a total 14 air-con rooms, two houses and one ocean villa which accommodates up to 36 guests. Clientele is predominantly Australian with about ten percent European. Noel said that some of his guests expected the resort to be on par with more-commercial holiday destinations, but Tawali is surrounded by dense jungle with no direct transportation routes. Getting food supplies, beverages, fuel for cooking and hot water can be quite challenging at times. I personally thought the standard of accommodation and food at all the resorts I visited was extremely high and there was always a cold beer available!



"Even though the wreck was well broken up, I found brass portholes and some personal memorabilia. The bow hold was piled high with live artillery shells"



I counted at least 63 red-and-white striped flags highlighted on the dive site map. But some of the sites looked very far away and I did wonder how often the dayboats visited. The dive centre normally uses the 18-metre-long Tawali Explorer as the main dive boat, but this was out of action due to engine failure. The recently refurbished Spirit of Niugini liveaboard would have made a great luxury alternative, but this was also having some engine problems, which left me with a choice of five smaller short-range craft that were only capable of carrying four divers each. We went out as far as Cherries Reef (an hour and a half boat ride each way), but the little boat was struggling with the rough sea conditions and to be honest I wasn't feeling much better so was glad to get in the water.

My dive guide, Ting, showed me around the reef and even posed for some pictures. We did a figure of eight pattern, up, over and around the sea mount. The vibrant corals were inhabited with bright orange anthias which reminded me of the Red Sea. I found a huge pufferfish that was so engrossed in coral munching that I managed to shove my dome port within a few centimetres of his face.

While I was staying on Lissenung Island, Nokozaki had raved about an amazing muck dive called Lawadi (used to be called Diana's Reef). The site turned out to be a shallow bay with two small rivers flowing into it. At first sight I couldn't see what all the fuss was about, I thought the gritty-looking seabed was a barren wasteland, but when I looked closer there was an incredible diversity of macro life. I had two two-hour long dives and still wanted to go back for more.

During my one-and-a-half hour drive to Tawali resort, I didn't think twice about the 20 or so rivers crossing the main road, but then I didn't expect there to be non-stop torrential rain for five days solid! It really was touch and go whether I would get back to Gurney airport at Milne Bay in time for my 9am flight back to Port Moresby and then onwards to Singapore and home. The shallow fords had become raging torrents that were barely passable. In some ways this was the perfect action-packed ending to my 20-day super-tour - every day had been a gripping adventure, there had been so many new experiences, cultural as well as natural. The coral reefs were the best I had ever experienced anywhere in the world and the sheer diversity of marine life was absolutely mind-blowing. Running over a squealing pig wasn't the best beginning. I'm sure I had awoken some sacred tribal spirit: the curse of Miss Piggy strikes again, hi-yah! Would I do it all over again? You bet! ■



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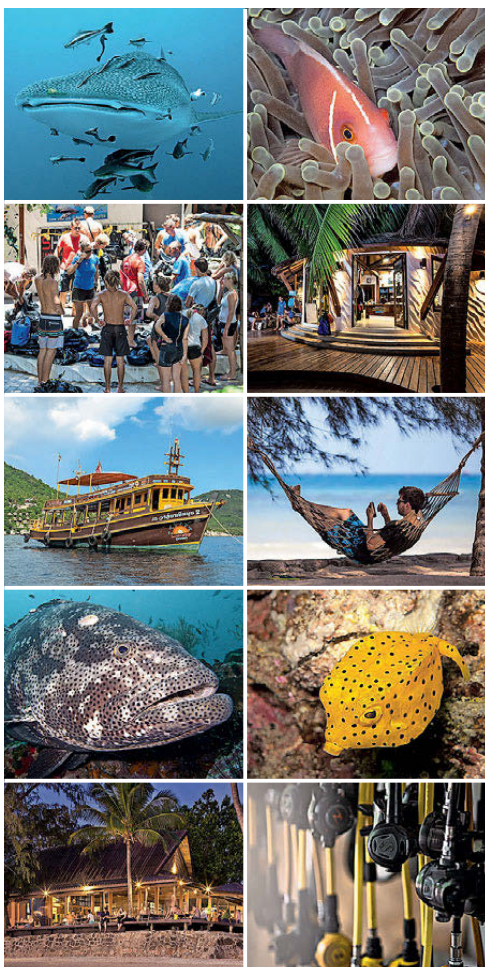
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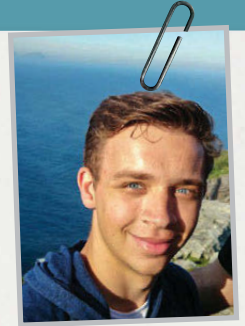
TRIM AND TECHNIQUE

Danny Copeland gets to grips with S-drills, twinsets and manifolds during an 'intro to tech' course

PHOTOGRAPHS BY MARK POWELL

“That looks mighty heavy”, I thought to myself, as Mark perched a monstrous steel twinset on top of the wooden bench, showing the set-up I'd be using for the weekend. My mind continued to wonder. “Why is that hose so fantastically long?” I quickly peered down to my manual. “And what on earth is an S-drill?!” Following on from my fish-filled dives in Newquay, I continued my early-summer UK tour by heading down to the National Diving and Adventure Centre in Chepstow. My latest mission was to complete an introductory course to technical diving under the guidance of the legendary Mark Powell of Dive Tech UK. Now I know what you're thinking. “Danny, you're all about marine conservation... what on earth are you doing dabbling in technical diving?” While it's true that Chepstow's 70m-plus deep quarry isn't well known for its abundant marine life and rainbow-reefs, getting into technical diving in this popular pit still serves a major role in my largely marine conservation and media-oriented Scholarship year. Firstly, many of the skills and practices employed by technical divers are well-utilised by marine scientists and media divers around the world. It's also been a good few years since I enrolled in any form of formal scuba training, so to me it seemed sensible to see technical diving as the next way to progress and sharpen my overall abilities as a scuba diver. And I won't lie... diving deeper and

venturing into places that few people visit sounds mighty cool to me (albeit a little scary)! The weekend began with an introduction to the history of technical diving, what technical diving really is (and what it isn't!), and the set-up I'd be using, manifolds and hog-loops abound. As Mark succinctly explained, there are fewer mis-steps that can be made in technical diving before a diver slides into the 'Diving Incident Pit of Doom'. The initially alien-looking tech-diving configuration is set up so as to minimise the chances of making those wrong steps to begin with. Surely enough, as Mark explained each element of the gear, it all began to make a lot of sense, and I began to wonder why everyone doesn't dive with these configurations in general! In between bursts of theory, we suited up and jumped in the water, sneaking in a total of four dives over the two days. My buddy Steve and I spent a lot of time getting to grips with new tech skills, such as S-drills, valve shutdowns and backward finning (something which I'm delighted to have nailed!), but we also spent time doing a lot of more-familiar skills; mask removal and replacement, and DSMB deployment to name a few. The critical difference here being a word that strikes fear into the heart of many a diver - trim. All skills had to be done hovering in the water column while in a strong trim position. The TDI Intro to Tech course isn't designed to qualify you to new depths or to do crazy new things, it's to give you a taste of the world of technical diving. But it certainly puts your diving skills to the test, with the aim of highlighting your weaknesses and the standard that's expected to progress in this field of diving. Prior to the course, I prided myself in thinking that my trim was pretty solid, even in a drysuit. Then I saw Mark in the water. The man hovers forever motionless in the water column, like some neoprene-clad hummingbird above a platform-shaped flower. It is something to be seen to be believed. I'd like to thank Mark for being such a thorough and supportive instructor, and for generously inviting me to join his course. While I will always be a fish-man at heart, I left Mark's course with a new selection of skills, and an understanding of my weaknesses - both of which have already helped to improve my diving overall. I cannot wait to dive deeper in technical diving during my Scholarship year! ■



Danny



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HOW THAT SHOT WAS TAKEN

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Martin Edge

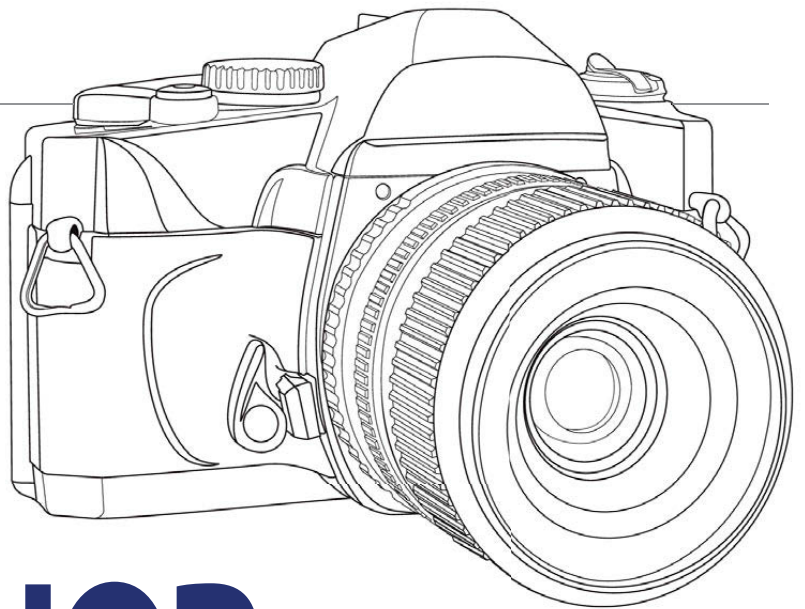


PHOTO WORKSHOP

ADVANCED WORKSHOP: COMPOSITIONAL ENCLOSURE

This issue, Martin discusses a photography technique that it appears he named

Photographs by MARTIN EDGE

There are no fixed rules in underwater photography, but there are guidelines, ideas and suggestions, which can help you to enhance the impact of your images. This month I want to discuss a compositional technique, which I refer to as enclosure. To be specific 'Compositional Enclosure'.

It's perhaps more of a consideration than a technique. In fact, I've just 'Googled' the phrase 'Compositional Enclosure in photography. The only 'hit' I had was the following:

[The Underwater Photographer - Page 292 - Google Books Re...](https://books.google.co.uk/books?isbn=1136098623) ✓

<https://books.google.co.uk/books?isbn=1136098623>

Martin Edge - 2012 - Photography

Enclosure. This is my own expression, and it's all to do with the edge of the picture ...

Compositional guidelines will advise that you check around the edge of the ...

It's an expression I use in both underwater and topside photography when the eye is too easily distracted towards the edge of the frame and eventually out of the picture. It's a critical error in all forms of picture making and I see it time and time again both topside and underwater. I find it most likely to occur when bright highlights are visible and invade the image around the top half of the frame. It's just as significant in land photography when a singular bright spot distracts the eye towards the highlight and leads the viewer out of the picture. Depending on the individual composition it's chance whether the image is a keeper or destined for the trash.

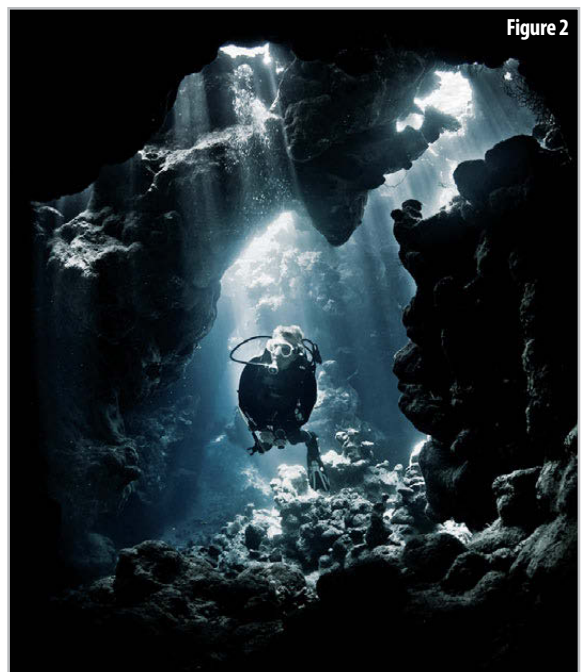


Figure 2

Figure 1



To delve a little deeper into this fault, objects which are close to the edge of the frame carry more visual weight, in so much as they draw the attention of the viewer more. We continually use this to our advantage when, for instance, we apply the compositional rule of thirds and place the focal point off centre. However, bright, harsh highlights are seldom an intended focal point.

OPTIONS

In the case of this month's set of images, let's look at number one first. Where does your eye first settle? For me it's at the top the frame. My eye catches the bright light at top centre, and then flows downwards, towards the left-hand side of the frame and from there out of the picture.

Now on to image number two. You will see that we still have plenty of bright highlights towards the top of the image, but I have managed to frame them in such a way that they are enclosed by the dark cave walls above. I chose this particular location within St John's Reef system in the Southern Red Sea - a favoured spot for many underwater photographers - to compose Sylvia within the sunbeams.

Image one was also taken in St John's, no more than 20 metres from where I composed image two. I considered the first option (image one), took a few snaps and discounted it, as I was unable to enclose the strong mid-day sunlight. ■

EQUIPMENT AND SETTINGS

Nikon D300 with a Nikon 10.5 fisheye lens. Subal housing, natural light, F5.6 at 1/60th sec, ISO 200.

PROFILE

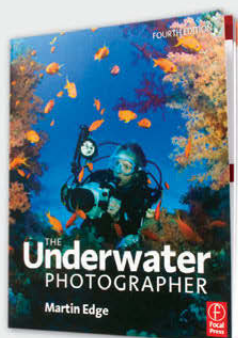
Martin Edge was born in Staffordshire, England in 1955, where he grew up without any inclination towards diving or photography. Years later, he moved to the Dorset coastline and in 1977 it was here that he learnt to dive. He had never had any particular interest or tuition in photography, but his desire to shoot pictures underwater grew into a passion bordering on an obsession. Over the last 20 years he has introduced, developed, motivated and mentored hundreds of underwater photographers.



SIGNED BY THE AUTHOR!

The fourth edition of Martin's book, *The Underwater Photographer*, is now available.

For a signed copy, phone 01202 887611 or email martin@edgeunderwaterphotography.com



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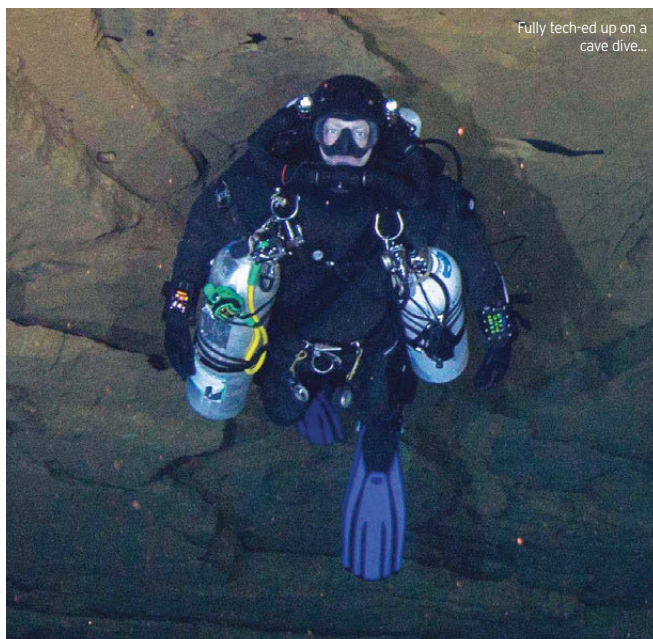
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THE BOOK OF TORBS

TV presenter and adventurer **ANDY TORBET** looks back at the truly British trials and tribulations involved with writing his very first book

Photographs courtesy of **ANDY TORBET, RICHARD STEVENSON, DAN BOLT, JOHNNY ROGERS AND PAUL THOMPSON**

My first-ever book is out. But, at nearly all stages, it didn't really go as planned. Rewind two and a half years and I'm sat in a meeting with the publishers pitching my idea: "It's called A Beginners' Guide to Adventure in the UK. It covers stuff anyone could do tomorrow with no formal training and only cheap or hired kit, nothing more than £20-£30 a day. Like snorkelling, wild camping, sit-on-top kayaking."

"That sounds like a great idea... for a second book."

I'm now looking very confused at the nice man from the publishing company.

"Erm... what does that mean?"

"Well, we think you need to write about your own exploits, about your extreme adventures in Britain."

I have to say my initial thoughts were just how terrible an idea that was. Who on Earth would want to read a book about me going off and having fun? I'd certainly not buy it. Obviously, when faced with an offer from one of the largest publishers in Europe to write a book, one does not say no, but I still struggled with the sense in writing a book like this and decided for it to be of any worth it could not just be a list of stories with me banging along the lines of 'check me out doing all this cool stuff, aren't I great!'. It had to be a celebration of Britain as an adventure destination. To extol its virtues for genuine exploration (most of which lies underwater, of course) and to show people that time and money need not be an obstacle to doing something significant and the opportunities were on their doorstep. I also hoped to squeeze in the odd bit of teach-

ing, e.g. Boyle's Law, what a contour line is, how rebreathers work. This was aimed at predominantly a non-diving, -climbing, -kayaking audience and I wanted to give them a glimpse of what was possible.

We discussed putting about ten different stories in the book and I already had the projects for a couple of chapters done. Clearly the book would try and show different adventures, but it would have a heavy diving-related lean as this is, by any measure, what I do best and most of. In fact the book, 12 chapters in the end, consisted of seven chapters dealing with underwater themes. The other stories cover things like a solo, one-day traverse of the Cuillin Ridge, a 12km dragon's spine of a mountain ridge which takes in 15 separate mountains, a number of climbing routes and requires you to do the equivalent height gain and loss of climbing Mont Blanc by the normal route. Twice. There is another chapter on esoteric climbing, a form of ascending rock faces which are made of loose, crumbling, untrustworthy geology and normally the sort of thing any sane climber would avoid. Then there are the ups and downs of my attempt to walk the longest straight line in the UK without crossing a road, and my even more frustrating attempts to sea kayak to St Kilda.

The diving chapters are also very different and intentionally so. I hope the non-divers out there will read and understand, as we do, the huge variety in submerged adventures in the UK and that the term 'underwater adventure' is no more specific than 'land adventure'.

It has taken two years, a number of edits and about 85,000 words. And writing it wasn't the hard bit.

Because only really four of the 12 had been completed when the book was commissioned - some had not even been thought up. But I'd discussed, in very general terms, some ideas with the publishers and

ANDY TORBET EXTREME ADVENTURES

A white-knuckle ride
around Britain



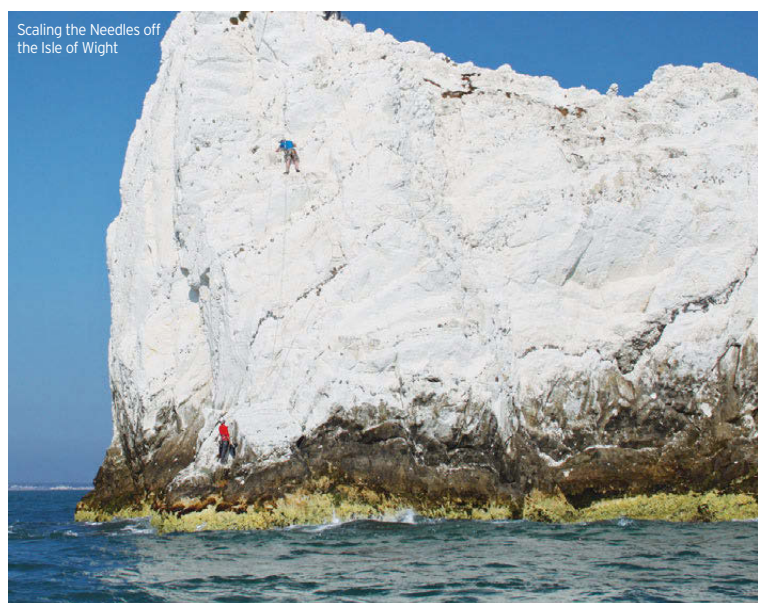
put pen to paper to come up with a tick list of things to do in the next six months to fulfil what I wanted the book to be about. This was where things started to go wrong. Every project without fail had to be postponed at least three times, some as much as nine. In fact, one project is still in a state of postponement even now and the bloody book is published. The problem was, and I'm sure it's something you, the reader, has some personal experience of, is the weather in the UK is not always predictable nor favourable for many of the outdoor pursuits we love. But sometimes even I'm surprised by how polar opposite of what you need is what you actually get. In fact, some chapters, like ice climbing, never happened as the two winters I had to get it done had no ice.

All these delays caused the book to be well overdue but the publishers, who I kept up to date, were very understanding. But next time, when dealing with anything in the British outdoors, I'll be less forthcoming with my promises and predictions. But what the book did give me, much like the articles I write for Sport Diver, is the impetus, the reason and the motivation to generate ideas and get off my backside and get out there. The best example of this was the unknown shipwreck. I really wanted to include a chapter on discovering a new shipwreck. Follow the story from first contact, through multi-beam sonar, to the first dive then the researching the mystery of the vessel's past. I'd put some feelers out and was lucky enough to get a call back from my friend Rich Stevenson, who had been doing some survey work with the Maritime and Coastguard Agency. The potential wreck they found, being no hazard to shipping sitting as it did about 70m down, was only of interest to them to update the chart so we took the co-ordinates and decided to dive it. As the story unfolded it became so interesting I spoke to the BBC and we ended up shooting a film on it, although with the weather causing nine postponements we finally went out in pretty 'robust' conditions and when we surfaced after nearly a three-hour dive, the film crew, having been slopping around in the RIB all that time and looking like extras from the zombie apocalypse, were incapable of picking up a camera.

Along with the shipwreck I mapped new cave systems, rediscovered lost, flooded mines, snorkelled the length and breadth of the country, dived the highest lakes in the UK, tried my hand at blowhole diving and visited and dived one of the most-remote yet most-spectacular corners of our country.

"Every project without fail had to be postponed at least three times, some as much as nine. In fact, one project is still in a state of postponement even now and the bloody book is published"

The hardest thing while writing the book was remembering who I'm speaking to. Whenever I write articles or give talks, it's usually for an audience of peers, normally divers. So I can throw in phrases like 'regs, weight, BC, wing, 200 bar, deco-stop' without fear I'm losing anyone. But we forget we are a small, elite group. Most people consider what we do adventurous at best, or madness at worst. It's true to say that the more polar explorers, desert-runners and high-altitude mountaineers I meet on the adventure circuit, all extolling the hardships of their chosen environment and how "X is the hardest place on Earth to survive", the more I realise they're all wrong. There is no place less suitable for human life than underwater. In fact, to find somewhere more alien for our species you need to go into space. There is a reason NASA astronauts train underwater. Writing the book has given me a renewed appreciation for



Scaling the Needles off the Isle of Wight



Crawling out of a cave system known as the Cave of Skulls

Freediving in the bridge of HMS Scylla



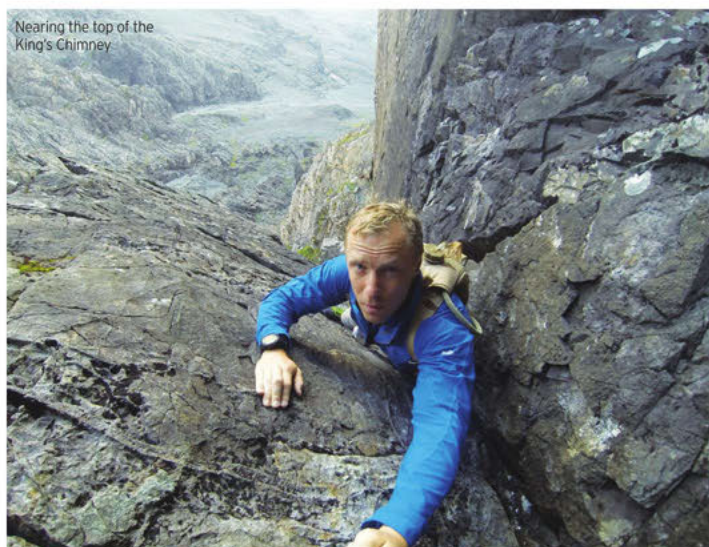
Waiting for the swell to subside before heading 70m into the Channel



Preparing to venture into the lost mine



Nearing the top of the King's Chimney



"...when we surfaced after nearly a three-hour dive, the film crew, having been slopping around in the RIB all that time and looking like extras from the zombie apocalypse, were incapable of picking up a camera"

the huge variety of submerged landscapes, wildlife and history out there, for the many different methods of leaving the surface from snorkels to rebreathers, and also for the huge potential for further exploration in our watery environment. This is true across the world, but just as true in our own country, on our own doorstep.

I hope the book is read by the non-diver, the non-outdoors person. And from it they are encouraged to get off the sofa, turn the TV off and get out there. But I also hope that divers who read the book are inspired to go out and explore... or at least knowingly laugh at some of the many mishaps that occur throughout that only another diver would truly appreciate. In the UK we have thousands of miles of coastline, rivers, lakes, underground waterways, flooded mines, mountain pools, waterfalls, bogs, ponds, wrecks, reefs and a diversity of nature where new species are still being discovered. Only a fraction of this has been explored - and only divers can explore it. If you choose to seek out the undiscovered corners I can guarantee you it will not go to plan, but the end result will be something you'll be proud of. ■

SCUBALAB WHAT'S NEW

SCUBAPRO MANTIS M1 | £369 (€512.06)

EXCLUSIVE REPORT

Editor Mark Evans takes a first look at Scubapro's latest foray into the world of wristwatch dive computers, the technologically advanced Mantis M1.

Scubapro, initially under the Uwaterc brand, now sporting SP, have been producing dive computers for many, many years, but they were late to the game with wrist-watch-style computers, first entering the fray with the Xtender, which to be fair was simply a rebranded Seiko unit and not a true 'Scubapro' product. They seriously upped their game with the Meridian, which really took the fight to their competitors, and this was soon joined by its junior sibling Chromis. Now the latest incarnation is the Mantis M1, which replaces the Meridian in the product line-up.

What made the Meridian stand out from the crowd was the design - it was a serious chunk of metal, with a real 'industrial' feel to it. The Mantis takes this one step further, with the button functions engraved quite large into the marine-grade 316L stainless steel around the scratch-resistant mineral glass screen - the whole thing screams heavy-duty. It is depth rated to 120m and has a user-replaceable battery that is calculated to last two years or 300 dives.

One of the first things you notice about the Mantis is how easy the operating system is to navigate. Much like the larger Galileo range, the button use is very intuitive, and thanks to the engraving, you will never be in doubt as to what each button does. And talking of the buttons, these utilise a magnetic system, which means that the casing remains totally watertight, as well as ensuring mechanical reliability. They have a nice, definite push action - there is no 'sponginess' at all.

It is a good job that the menu is so simple to explore, as the Mantis not only offers scuba, apnea (freediving) and gauge modes alongside the basic clock functions, it can also cope with closed-circuit rebreathers and even has a 'swim' mode.

Like the range-topping Galileo Sol, the scuba setting uses Scubapro's tried-and-tested ZHL-8 predictive multi-gas algorithm and can handle



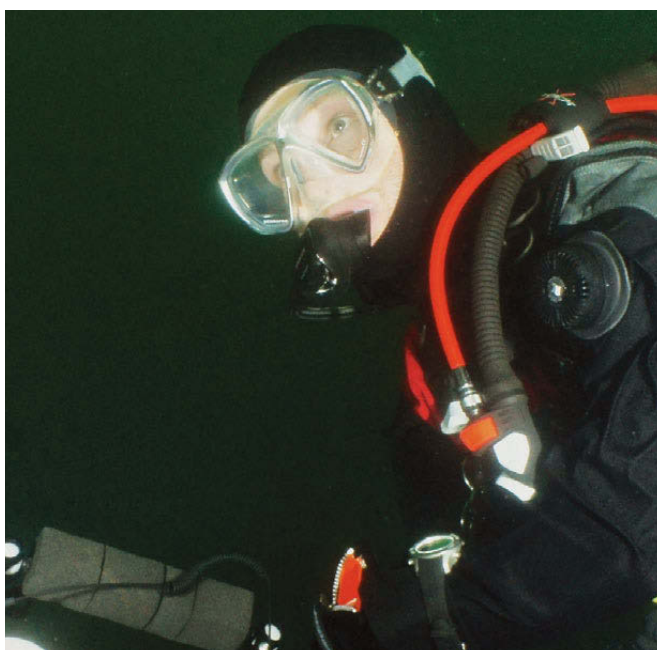
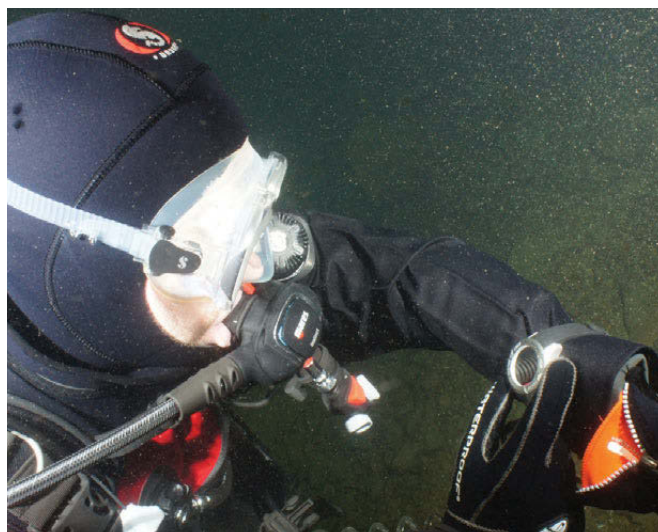
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up to three nitrox settings from 21-100 percent, as well as offering Profile Dependent Intermediate Stops (PDIS) and micro-bubble selection.

The apnea mode features an enhanced logbook for storing repetitive dives under the same session, and alarms for session cumulated depth, dive time interval, surface interval, ascent speed and more.

The CCR mode has a fixed PP02 algorithm, with two set points and bailout, while the swim setting has a stroke counter and a distance tracker. There is even an altimeter and barometer, so you can bring the Mantis into use when you are walking or hiking.

The screen boasts extra-sharp characters for easy readability underwater - these were 'inspired by the sharpness of Samurai katanas', according to the Scubapro promotional material, but whatever the source, the result is a crystal-clear display, albeit quite small due to the nature of the unit,

especially compared with the much-larger wrist-mounted Galileo range. The Mantis is certainly one of the most-advanced wrist-watch computers on the market, and you can pair it with an optional heart-rate monitor to make the most of the computer's biometric capabilities. Through heart-rate analysis, which constantly readjusts the decompression schedule, combined with PDIS and personalised settings for micro-bubbles and level of conservation, you have a computer which incorporates your unique physiological factors into its calculations. Uniquely, this heart-rate monitor can also be used in the 'swim' mode, further enhancing the multi-use aspects of this wrist-watch computer. The Mantis can also be fitted with coloured straps (blue, red, yellow and pink) for those who want to add a bit of vibrancy to their kit.

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SCUBALAB GEAR GUIDE

Each month the Sport Diver test team assemble to rate and review a selection of diving equipment from a range of manufacturers. This issue: **BCDs under £250**



THE TEST TEAM



MARK EVANS

- Sport Diver editor
- PADI Divemaster
- 30 years of diving experience



MATT MARTIN

- Dive officer, Blue Planet Aquarium
- PADI OWSI
- 10 years of diving experience



WILL HARRISON

- Sport Diver deputy editor
- PADI TEC 50
- 6 years of diving experience



BARRY HENDERSON

- Rope access specialist
- NAUI Open Water Diver
- 5 years of diving experience

BCDS. BCDs are one of the core essentials of your dive kit - after all, without it, you aren't going to have anything to hold your tank (as well as your regulators) on your back, and you will have no means of buoyancy control (unless you are in a drysuit, but let's not get into that debate!).

We split the BCDs into three price brackets - under £250, £250-£400, and over £400 - and then assembled the Test Team to venture into the chilly waters of Vivian Quarry in the heart of Snowdonia in North Wales in June for the annual review.

This issue we are focusing on the budget end of the scale to see what is available in today's marketplace. As well as giving our opinion on the looks of the jackets - after all, in order to take the fight to rival sports such as mountain biking, kite-surfing, wake-boarding and the like, aesthetics are becoming increasingly important in diving - we also comment on the comfort of the BCDs, and the ease of use and performance of power inflators, pull dumps, pockets, integrated weights, etc.

Plus, each month, we will offer handy hints and advice on keeping your BCDs in tip-top condition.

"BCDs are one of the core essentials of your dive kit - after all, without it, you aren't going to have anything to hold your tank (as well as your regulators) on your back, and you will have no means of buoyancy control (unless you are in a drysuit, but let's not get into that debate)!"

BCDS ON TEST

MODELS

- Beaver Lightning
- Mares Prime
- Oceanic EX100
- Scubapro X-One
- Seac Sub Pro 1000 HD
- Sopras Sub School
- SubGear Pure Black

DATE TESTED 15/6/15

WATER TEMPERATURE
8-9 degrees C

Test dives conducted at Vivian Diving Centre in Llanberis, North Wales

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SCUBAPRO

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BEFORE YOU HIT THE WATER: Get comfortable - adjust the internal ends of the cummerbund so the outer ends overlap between three to six inches when secured over your stomach. Prep for tank - thread tank strap(s) through their buckles, and then slip on to your tank, making such buckles are centred and Velcro patches are positioned where they can be utilised.



BEAVER LIGHTNING | £210 (€295)



MARK: The Beaver Lightning has been the company's entry-level jacket for a few years now, and at a tenner over £200, it represents excellent value for money. One quick fondle of the material it is made from and you know it will be next to bulletproof - an ideal dive centre or rental jacket where it is going to get a lot of use and perhaps not that much care. Big pockets, decent pull dumps and power inflator, and a reasonable performance.

WILL: Looks a bit basic/bland, however it does have absolutely enormous pockets which are easy to access, and it gave quite a snug fit, performing adequately in the water. The power inflator and pull dumps work reasonably well.

MATT: Quite an old-fashioned-

looking jacket BCD, but it is robustly made, so will stand up to plenty of abuse - for instance, in a dive centre or school. Very large pockets, and the pull dumps work okay, but need bigger toggles to make them easier to find. I found the oral inflate on the power inflator quite difficult because of the orientation of the mouthpiece.

BARRY: I don't actually think this looks that bad, it is just not as stylish as some of its rivals in this bracket. I found that the pull dumps were adequate, but like Matt, I also found it awkward to locate and operate the dumps due to the small size of the toggles.

SPORT DIVER VERDICT	
PERFORMANCE	★★★★★
COMFORT	★★★★★
LOOKS	★★★★★
VALUE FOR MONEY	★★★★★

WE LIKE
Price, comfort, build quality

WE DON'T LIKE
Bland looks, small toggles on pull dumps

MARES PRIME | £202 (€284)



MARK: Mares have been producing quality BCDs for many, many years, and the Prime continues this track record. It has the subtle good looks you'd expect from the Italian brand, but equally it works well too, with efficient power inflator and pull dumps, and pockets you can access without being a contortionist. It is all set up to take the optional MRS+ integrated weight system, though that does boost the price by another £50 or so.

WILL: Cracking jacket. Holds you well in the water and on the surface, the pockets are a decent size and easy to access, and it is very comfortable. The power inflator and pull dumps work well - the shoulder dump in particular is a monster.

MATT: Comfortable jacket, and subtle good looks. Everything is where you'd expect it to be, and it all just falls to hand. The ergonomic power inflator sits nicely in your gloved hand and works well, and is paired with efficient pull dumps. Rugged zips on the pockets, which are easy to access.

BARRY: Nice jacket, looks and feels very well made. Comfortable topside and in the water, it provides plenty of support in the water. The power inflator and pull dumps work well, and I could get into the pockets without too much difficulty.

SPORT DIVER VERDICT	
PERFORMANCE	★★★★★
COMFORT	★★★★★
LOOKS	★★★★★
VALUE FOR MONEY	★★★★★

WE LIKE
Price, looks, upgrade option, comfort

WE DON'T LIKE
Nothing worth mentioning

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EXCLUSIVE PACKAGES

Scubapro MK25/S600 Regulator with R195 Octo & Twin Console



BEFORE YOU HIT THE WATER: Give it a thorough check-over - turn on the air in your cylinder and inflate the BCD to test for leaks and proper power-inflator function. Pull all of the dump valve cords to make sure the exhausts are working correctly and that there is no wear and tear to the string. If fitted, ensure integrated weights are securely in place.

OCEANIC EX100 | £199 (€279)



MARK: This is an exceptionally well-featured jacket for the price, and it performs well too, offering plenty of support both on the surface and underwater. The pockets are a decent size but awkward to access. The integrated weights are solid and feel very secure when in place. The pull dumps and the power inflator make a good combo and offer a good all-round performance.

WILL: Decent-looking jacket, which feels nice and solid. Held me well under the water and on the surface. No tank roll, comfortable fit and excellent kidney and shoulder dumps. The integrated weight system is neat and works well. Great BCD for the money.

MATT: Very comfortable jacket

with a padded backplate. The pockets are difficult to access, and the D-rings are quite small, but the integrated weight system works well, and the power inflator sits just where you want it. Overall, very nice jacket, especially at under £200.

BARRY: Nice looks, and a good fit. Quite small toggles on the pull dumps, but the power inflator works well. Pockets are a bit awkward to access underwater. Good performance when diving, minimal tank roll. Bargain price.

SPORT DIVER VERDICT	
PERFORMANCE	★★★★★
COMFORT	★★★★★
LOOKS	★★★★★
VALUE FOR MONEY	★★★★★



WE LIKE

Price, build quality, integrated weights, looks



WE DON'T LIKE

Pockets are a bit awkward to access

SCUBAPRO X-ONE | £249 (€349)



MARK: By far the best power inflator in the group, compact but very powerful. Extremely comfortable and supportive in the water, with no tank movement whatsoever. Pull dumps have large toggles and work very well. Pockets are quite small and a faff to get into. Optional integrated weights would work well, but knock up the price of the jacket. Quality product from Scubapro, as you'd expect.

WILL: Robust build quality, and good looking to boot. Very comfortable and lots of support in the water - zero tank roll. Decent power inflator - though I don't like the buttons being side by side - and rapid pull dumps. Pockets are quite hard to access.

MATT: I am not a big fan of the

power inflator either, guess I am just used to those that have the deflate button on a different orientation to the inflate button. It does work well though, as do the pull dumps, which are easy to find thanks to the toggle design. Good looks and a durable build quality make for a great overall jacket - steady away, nice piece of kit.

BARRY: Great-looking jacket that fits extremely well. Well-built, feels quite solid and robust. The pull dumps all worked well and have nice, chunky toggles. The power inflator is small but powerful.

SPORT DIVER VERDICT	
PERFORMANCE	★★★★★
COMFORT	★★★★★
LOOKS	★★★★★
VALUE FOR MONEY	★★★★★



WE LIKE

Build quality, comfort, looks, performance



WE DON'T LIKE

Design of power inflator split opinion

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RETURNING HOME AFTER A DAY'S DIVING: Hose it - start the cleaning process with a hearty wash using a freshwater hose. This will knock off any big chunks of sand and dirt, as well as residual salt. Soak it - Fill a tub with fresh water, dunk the BCD repeatedly, then leave it to soak for about five minutes. Afterwards, give it another slosh with the fresh water hose.

SEAC SUB PRO 1000 | £249 (€349)



MARK: Very comfortable and supportive jacket, both on land and in the water. Excellent dump valves paired with a decent power inflator. I found the pockets are little awkward to access, but the integrated weights were solid and felt safe and secure when locked into place. Good all-round jacket for the money.

WILL: I personally am not a fan of the looks - the yellow is just too in-your-face. It is a bit of a 'school look'. However, performance-wise it is good, with decent pull dumps and power inflator, good-sized pockets that are easily accessible.

MATT: Fairly standard design when it comes to jacket-style BCDs, but well made and with some nice little touches. Efficient shoulder dump and decent power

inflator. The pockets are a good size, and easy to access via the zippers. The integrated weights work well, and the whole thing is comfortable.

BARRY: Not a bad jacket overall. I like the look of it, with the vibrant flashes of yellow. It fit well, with little tank movement, and was supportive underwater. It was comfortable, the pull dumps and power inflator work well, and the integrated weights were fine.

SPORT DIVER VERDICT	
PERFORMANCE	★★★★★
COMFORT	★★★★★
LOOKS	★★★★★
VALUE FOR MONEY	★★★★★



WE LIKE

Build quality, features, price, comfort



WE DON'T LIKE

Looks split opinion

SOPRAS SUB SCHOOL | £210 (€295)



MARK: The name says it all. Sopras Sub built this for use in dive centres and schools, and so they have cut back on any extras and just gone for a basic jacket that can withstand any hammer from students. In use, it is fine, with reasonable pull dumps and power inflator, but the shoulder dump cord is far too long.

WILL: Basic-looking, and pretty sparse in terms of extras, but as the name suggests, this is built with dive schools in mind, and in that case you just want something durable and rugged. It has large pockets, but they are quite hard to access. The power inflator and pull dumps are adequate, but what is with the long cord?

MATT: Basic jacket, but well built from quality materials to put up

with dive centre wear and tear. I like the elastic cummerbund. Good pockets that are a decent size. Non-existent D-rings or other extras. Shoulder dump toggle hard to find at the end of a long cord.

BARRY: Bland jacket, but it does what it sets out to do - build a solid jacket for school use. It is robustly constructed and would no doubt give years of service. Comfortable enough, with reasonable performance from the pull dumps and power inflator, but first thing I would do is shorten that shoulder pull dump cord by about six to eight inches.

SPORT DIVER VERDICT	
PERFORMANCE	★★★★★
COMFORT	★★★★★
LOOKS	★★★★★
VALUE FOR MONEY	★★★★★



WE LIKE

Build quality, price



WE DON'T LIKE

Long cord on shoulder pull dump

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RETURNING HOME AFTER A DAY'S DIVING: Final okay - make sure everything is in working order by reinserting the - empty - integrated weight pockets and locking them in place, fully inflating the bladder and checking for leaks, and then pulling the corrugated hose dump and pull dump cords. Partially inflate the bladder and hang-dry the BCD out of direct sunlight.

SUBGEAR PURE BLACK | £249 (€349)

**Sport Diver
CHOICE**



MARK: For the second year running this has taken the Choice award, and for good reason. At £249, this fully featured jacket could hold its own against BCDs costing £100 more quite easily. It is comfortable, performs well in the water, and it looks good in a subtle way. Integrated weights, multiple D-rings, great dual-zipped pockets - excellent.

WILL: Decent jacket. Simple good looks and a solid build quality. The pull dumps and power inflator work well, and the integrated weights are easy to use. The pockets are large and because they have dual zippers, you can decide if you want them to open from the front or from the back.

MATT: I was relatively unaware of having this jacket on, which must

be a sign of how comfortable and easy to use it is. The dump valve toggles have a nice weight to them, the power inflator is efficient, and the integrated weights are good, but I struggled with the pockets a little.

BARRY: Looks good and feels comfortable on, both topside and under the water, where it held me very well. Little tank movement. The pockets are easy to access through the chunky zippers. The integrated weights feel solid, and the dump valves and power inflator were simple to locate and operate.

SPORT DIVER VERDICT

PERFORMANCE	★★★★★
COMFORT	★★★★★
LOOKS	★★★★★
VALUE FOR MONEY	★★★★★



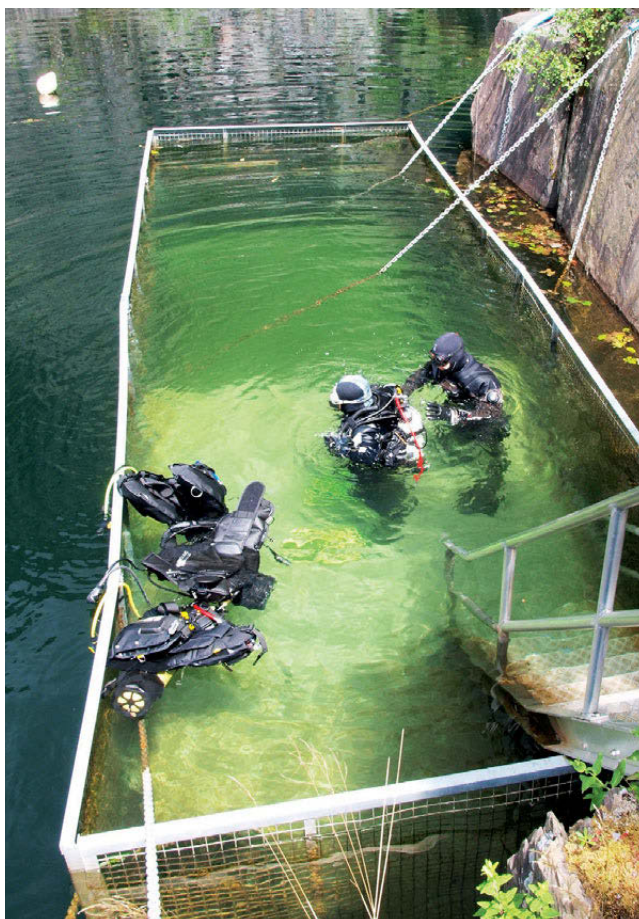
WE LIKE

Looks, price, build quality, performance, comfort



WE DON'T LIKE

Nothing worth mentioning



CONCLUSION. The standard of the budget-end jackets just gets better and better, and there are a few here that wouldn't look out of place in the next price bracket. They all performed okay, with some excelling in certain areas, which is great news for divers wanting a bargain-basement BCD in the near future. For the Best Value award, it was a battle between the Oceanic EX100 and the Mares Prime. There was only a couple of quid difference in price, and both performed very well in the water. In the end, despite the undoubted style of the sporty Italian, the American Oceanic won out, thanks to its inclusion of integrated weights into a jacket costing under £200. Simply a fantastic little BCD for the money.

For the Choice award, it was a scrap between the Scubapro X-One, the SubGear Pure Black and the Seac Sub Pro 1000 HD. The Scubapro was well made and looked the part, but it lacked integrated weights as standard. The Seac Sub was fully featured, but its colourful looks split opinion. In the end, the SubGear Pure Black took the title for the second year running, offering a great jacket for a great price.



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THE DRY-SERIES

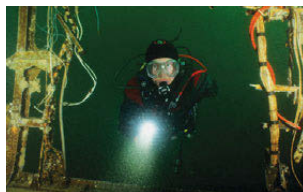
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SCUBALAB TEST EXTRA

SUBGEAR SECTOR 5 AND SECTOR 7 | £109-£139 (€151.98-€193.81)



Mark Evans: Torches have come on a long way since I started diving many, many moons ago. Obviously the main technological advance has been the rise of the LED, which has all but obliterated competition from HID, Xenon and the like. They are robust, extremely bright and give fantastically long burn times, which makes them ideal for use in scuba diving applications.

The other difference is the shape of torches. These days many are cylindrical, or designed to fit on the back of your hand, but back in the day, virtually all primary diving torches were chunky, pistol-grip units, so I was quite taken by these SubGear throwbacks to a forgotten era.

Both of the torches run on C-cell batteries - four for the smaller Sector 5, and eight for the larger Sector 7 - and both are operated by a simple trigger set-up. A half-squeeze produces a flash of illumination, while a full squeeze provides constant light. Another squeeze turns the torch off. There is also a handy locking clip

to prevent accidental operation when it is in transit or storage. We found that this was easy to use underwater, even with thick neoprene gloves on, and the pistol grip itself sits comfortably in your hand. Will was wielding both on a photo dive and was happily pulling off some John Woo moves with his twin torch 'guns'. Boys and their toys...

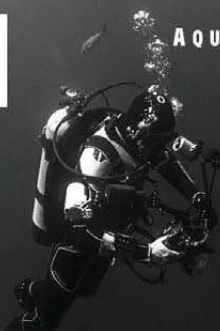
The Sector 5 puts out 550 lumens of light and the Sector 7 produces 700 lumens, and it is a nice bright, white light in both cases. As you can see from the photographs, there is a decent beam from the compact and the larger torch, so either would work as a primary dive torch in the UK and abroad. Burn times are also good - 24 hours for the Sector 5, and 30 hours for the Sector 7.

If you are in the market for a dive torch and want to go a bit 'retro', these are well worth checking out. Both are depth-rated to 100m, and come with a safety wrist lanyard.

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SCUBALAB TEST EXTRA

SOPRASSUB TRILAMINATE DRYSUIT FRONT ZIPPER | £785 (€1,105)



Will Harrison: In a world of increasingly fancy drysuits - those made with inner liners for added manoeuvrability, or Kevlar exteriors for increased durability - the Sopras Sub is a unit that keeps things simple. Everything about it screams functionality, even its name: SoprasSub Trilaminate Drysuit Front Zipper. I get what they're doing here - drysuit diving is the less-fluffy, less-frilly side of scuba, so by keeping things un-fanciful, they're playing the we-mean-business card - but they could have come up with *something*. Excalibur, maybe... or Neptune's Beard... or, you know, *something*. That said, if you're in the market for a trilaminate drysuit with a front-entry zipper... well, you know you can add this to the shortlist straightaway.

Aside from the uninventive name, the suit does everything you would expect from a drysuit, including keeping you dry. The front-entry design does make it very easy to get in and out (though my man shoulders

would have probably appreciated the next size up), with the soft latex neck and wrist seals both straightforward to access and very comfortable once on (and trimmed to size). The knees are covered in a rubberised, abrasion fabric to withstand wear and tear, while the telescopic system (fastened with a crotch strap) allows divers to get that snug fit - a feature that really makes a difference in-water.

In the water the suit offers a pleasant diving experience. The SI TECH valves work effectively, with both the chest inflator and the arm dump valve well placed and efficient. The cut of the legs also allows minimal airflow into the lower-leg - once in the trim position, the suit material seals around the knees. Courtesy of the aforementioned telescopic torso, the suit has a made-to-measure feel, and we all know how valuable comfort is under the waterline.

I completed just two dives in the suit, and I enjoyed both. While I'm not a huge fan of the general design (if I was being kind, I'd

call it 'retro'), the feel and comfort more than made up for superficial shortcomings. And on the upside, a splash of red always looks great in photos...

Solid, comfortable and reliable: an all-round safe bet if you're in the market for a 'trilaminate drysuit with a front-entry zipper' (wink, wink). There is one thing that sets this suit apart though, one thing that I have never seen before on a drysuit, one thing that makes it a little less run-of-the-mill: retractable cuffs. Ok, so that doesn't sound that exciting, but I have to say it's a great idea. How many times have you fumbled over the glove-vs-sleeve debacle when kitting up? If you use wet gloves, the answer is probably 'every dive'. I tend to give up and leave my gloves unzipped which, thermally-speaking, probably isn't ideal. But no more! The Sopras Sub allows you to Velcro the cuffs further back from the hand, allowing more room for gloves or a wrist-watch style computer. Simple, but extremely effective.

www.soprasub.com



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SCUBALAB LONG TERM

SCUBAPRO MANTIS M1

Scubapro were a little late to the game when it came to watch-style dive computers. Their first effort, the Xtender, is probably best forgotten, but their initial home-grown unit, the Meridian, was a totally different animal. The new Mantis is taking over from the Meridian, but it keeps all of the plus points of that computer - the chunky metal case, the easy-to-read display, etc - and gives it a tweak in the looks department as well as adding in a lot of other functions, including multiple gas mixes, a CCR mode, and even a swim function alongside more-familiar apnea and gauge modes. The Mantis can also be paired up with an optional heart-rate monitor to further personalise the algorithm to you. We are looking forward to diving this in the coming months.



INFORMATION	
DATE ACQUIRED	MAY 2015
SUGGESTED RETAIL PRICE	£369
NUMBER OF DIVES	0
TIME IN WATER	0 HRS 0 MINS

Mark Evans
www.scubapro.co.uk

HOLLIS EXPLORER eSCR

Well, the Hollis Explorer can certainly take a full-on week of UK wreck diving on the chin. As you will have seen from the article on page 36, it never missed a beat all week as we dived on the German High Seas Fleet in the Orkney Islands. I was pleased how quick and easy it was to swap out the sofnaime between dives and have it ready to go again.



INFORMATION	
DATE ACQUIRED	MARCH 2015
SUGGESTED RETAIL PRICE	£4,199
NUMBER OF DIVES	26
TIME IN WATER	25 HRS 35 MINS

Mark Evans
www.hollis.com

URSUIT HEAVY LIGHT KEVLAR BDS

Having had the Ursuit Heavy Light Kevlar BDS on a few salty dips it was back to the quarry this month as the Test Team got to work reviewing dozens of BCDs (see pp.74-84). Two solid days spent almost entirely in your drysuit is a big test of its comfort, while the continual donning of BCDs is a good test of both manoeuvrability and durability. The Ursuit was a joy throughout, hours rolling past without a hint of discomfort. The only reason the suit was ever opened was for a pee break, and courtesy of the front-entry system I could do this without bothering any of my hard-at-work Test Team colleagues. The BCD test also served up a proper appreciation of the suit's huge pockets. Many of the BCDs struggled to take a spare mask or large spool. All hail good drysuit pockets!



INFORMATION	
DATE ACQUIRED	MARCH 2015
SUGGESTED RETAIL PRICE	£1,600
NUMBER OF DIVES	8
TIME IN WATER	7 HRS 45 MINS

Will Harrison
www.liquidsports.co.uk

FINN SUB 3000 SHORT

The Finn Sub 3000 Short proved to be an awesome tool on the German World War One wrecks at Scapa Flow. On full power the beam just scythed through the floating detritus in the water, and put many an umbilical to shame. In fact, it was so bright and piercing, in many of the photographs, I had to drop it to half power, or even the lowest setting, so it didn't blow out Jason's photographs.



INFORMATION	
DATE ACQUIRED	APRIL 2015
SUGGESTED RETAIL PRICE	£549
NUMBER OF DIVES	19
TIME IN WATER	17 HRS 50 MINS

Mark Evans
www.finnsb.com



MASKS & SNORKELS



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SCUBAPRO X-BLACK



Having rated the X-Black very highly during recent BCD testing, I was keen to have a proper play with it while it remained in the Long Term Test stable. Editor Mark Evans and I headed to Stoney Cove for a couple of dives and the jacket did not disappoint. I was particularly impressed with the delicateness of the inflator and dump valves with regards to buoyancy adjustment. That said, big fills and dumps were also very effective.

Will Harrison
www.scubapro.co.uk

INFORMATION

DATE ACQUIRED	FEBRUARY 2015
SUGGESTED RETAIL PRICE	£549
NUMBER OF DIVES	17
TIME IN WATER	15 HRS 50 MINS

KUBI DRY GLOVE SYSTEM



The KUBIs certainly proved their worth in the depths of Scapa Flow. Buddy Jason and I were logging dives of around an hour or more, and the water temperature down at 35-40m was only 8 degrees C, so we (Jason also has KUBIs, albeit factory-fitted ones via his Otter drysuit, rather than retro-fit) were very pleased to retain a high degree of dexterity in our fingers for operating cameras and rebreathers by having warm, dry hands.

This time around, I teamed the Merino wool glove liners with a pair of Fourth Element Xerotherm wrist warmers and boy, did that work a treat! I couldn't help but grin inside as others on the boat enviously watched Jason and I swiftly donning our KUBIs while they struggled with damp wet gloves.

Mark Evans
www.KUBIstore.com

INFORMATION

DATE ACQUIRED	FEBRUARY 2015
SUGGESTED RETAIL PRICE	£156
NUMBER OF DIVES	33
TIME IN WATER	31 HRS 45 MINS

APEKS LIFELINE 30-METRE SPOOL

Well, the Apeks Lifeline spool accompanied me on my venture north of the border, to the wreck-diving Mecca of Scapa Flow, and not once did it leave my drysuit pocket!

One of the benefits of diving in Scapa is that all of the wrecks have permanent shotlines, and so as we were limiting our exploration looking for photo ops, buddy Jason and I ended up using these to ascend and descend and so the Lifeline was never called into action, though it was comforting to know it was there if needed.

I am heading to Egypt as I write this, and I am sure that the spool will be pressed into duty in the waters of the Red Sea.

Mark Evans
www.apeks.co.uk



INFORMATION

DATE ACQUIRED	MAY 2015
SUGGESTED RETAIL PRICE	£60
NUMBER OF DIVES	14
TIME IN WATER	13 HRS 45 MINS

BARE HDC EXPEDITION TECH DRY

Well that's my time with the BARE HDC Expedition Tech Dry come to an end, and I will be sad to say goodbye to a suit that has seriously made me consider returning to membrane drysuits after being seduced away by a compressed neoprene number.

The construction is robust and the whole suit just feels extremely durable. Combined with either, or both, the SB Mid- and Base Layers and I have been kept lovely and warm whatever the water temperature.

And the keen-eyed will have noticed that the price of the HDC Expedition has dropped from £1,699 to £1,479.26. Similarly, there has also been a price reduction on the SB Mid-Layer to £213.12 and the SB Base Layer to £77.70 each. Makes it an even better buy!

Dave Hope
www.baresports.com



END OF TERM

INFORMATION

DATE ACQUIRED	OCTOBER 2014
SUGGESTED RETAIL PRICE	£1,479.26
NUMBER OF DIVES	21
TIME IN WATER	19 HRS 55 MINS



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Meeting MANTHOS

STUART PHILPOTT goes diving with the world's first ever physically challenged Megalodon rebreather instructor

Photographs by **STUART PHILPOTT**

Every so often I meet someone in the diving community that has an extraordinary story to tell, a story that is an inspiration to us all. During a technical diving trip to Marina Rubicon dive centre at Playa Blanca on Lanzarote, I bumped into Manthos Marras, who was in the final stages of completing his Megalodon rebreather instructor course (successfully, I might add). Attaining rebreather instructor status is by no means an easy feat, but what makes this achievement even more remarkable is the fact that Manthos is a paraplegic, which in layman's terms means paralysed from the waist down. There had been no exceptions or waivers for his disability throughout the gruelling course. This was all down to sheer hard work and determination.

As part of the certification process, Manthos had to teach a full Megalodon rebreather course under the scrutinising eyes of Marina Rubicon's Instructor Trainer Christian Massaad. I managed to tag along on a number of his classroom and underwater training sessions just to see how he was doing. When the course was finally over, I sat down with Manthos to talk about his life-changing accident, achievements and future goals.

When he was a boy, Manthos would regularly go swimming and snorkelling in the clear blue Aegean waters of his native Greece, but never once considered scuba diving. He thought it was out of his reach. He always wanted to work on submarines, so joined the Naval Academy and trained to be a mechanical engineer. One month after completing his training he broke his spine in a motorcycle accident which left him paralysed from the waist down. He only got to go on a submarine once. The Navy accepted full responsibility for the accident (he was hit by a supply truck on the Naval base), so Manthos received a full disability pension.

After a period of rehabilitation he set up a business in Athens selling medical equipment. In his spare time, Manthos started road racing and competed in a number of marathons and half-marathons, including the London Marathon. Out of the blue, a representative from the Greek Diving Scuba Federation contacted him. They were looking for sporty disabled people to go on a scuba-diving course. Manthos was surprised he had been chosen but was more than happy to participate. There were 12 other disabled people on the course organised by DDI (Disabled Divers International). Manthos said: "The course was in June. I was carried to the water from the beach in just my shorts and T-shirt. I felt free. It felt natural to be underwater without gravity." He felt so confident that he nearly finished the entire course on the first intro session.

BEYOND TECHNICAL

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"It's strange to think that such a debilitating accident could open so many new exciting possibilities. I guess if you have the right mindset nothing is impossible"

In June 1994, Manthos qualified as a one-star CMAS Diver. Scuba diving had opened up a whole new career path for him. He was now diving all the time and wanted to get more certifications. After qualifying as a disabled diver, he went and worked at Milos Dive Centre situated on a small island north of Crete. Over the next four years there were plenty of overseas diving trips, the Bahamas being a particular favourite. He carried on with his training and by 1998 had completed the PADI Advanced, Rescue Diver and Divemaster courses with more than 400 logged dives.

Manthos spoke to PADI Europe about enrolling on an instructor course and they said he was eligible to apply. In 2000, he completed a PADI IDC and IE in Athens. Out of 12 candidates he finished second overall and even came tenth on the timed swim! Within three to four months of qualifying as an instructor, he had clocked up more than 60 PADI certifications. In 2003, Manthos went back to his father's home village Loutra on the island of Kythnos and opened up his first dive centre, Aqua Team, with his brother-in-law. They started with ten sets of kit and a compressor. Most of their clientele were local Greeks.

Technical diving was the next natural step forward. He completed his TDI Advanced Nitrox and Extended Range Instructor courses during a trip to Lake Voulismeni at Agios Nikolaos in Crete. For many years, the 137-metre-diameter lake was thought to be 'bottomless'. But in 1976, Jacques Cousteau's team discovered the lake actually maxed out at 64m - the perfect depth for tech diver training. Just to add extra intrigue there was some talk that the German Army had dumped munitions, including tanks, trucks, motorbikes and guns into the lake at the end of World War Two. Manthos said he found some artefacts on the lakebed, but a thick layer of sediment had covered almost everything.

In 2006, Manthos met up with his original certifying DDI Instructor and was persuaded to try out a Submatix semi-closed rebreather. He became a qualified user and then progressed to instructor under the NAUI association. In 2009, Manthos moved into the realms of CCR trimix using the Hammerhead rebreather and then in 2013 became an approved Hammerhead instructor.

Manthos wanted to get more CCR training so approached the ANDI representative in Greece. His dive centre became ANDI affiliated and he crossed over all his instructor ratings. A diving colleague returned from a trip to Lanzarote in the Canary Islands and recommended speaking to Christian Massaad from Marina Rubicon Technical Diving Centre if he wanted to do more rebreather training. Marina Rubicon is an extremely popular outfit offering the full range of tech diver training courses from open circuit to trimix rebreather. In April 2014, Manthos booked a trip to Lanzarote and spent the next few weeks training on the JJ and the Megalodon CCR units. When the courses finally ended he decided to buy a brand-new Inner Space Systems Corp Megalodon rebreather and take it back with him to Greece. In December 2014, he flew back to Lanzarote to start his Megalodon instructor course, which brings me right back to present date.

Dive centres, boats and marinas are not the most wheelchair-friendly places but Manthos didn't seem to have any problems kitting up or getting on and off the RIB by himself. I only saw him falter once. We had just



Manthos working with Christian



Christian congratulates Manthos on successfully becoming a Meg instructor

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Manthos doesn't wear fins underwater



Manthos and the dive team



Manthos running through a training scenario

returned from a rebreather dive. Everybody jumped off the RIB, rinsed off their equipment and walked back to the dive centre as normal. On this occasion I had been fiddling about with my camera so was last to jump off the boat. As I picked up my gear, I noticed Manthos sitting quietly and patiently on the jetty in his wheelchair. When I asked him if he was okay he told me he was waiting for someone to give him a push up the steep gang plank (the tide had gone out, so it was inclined at an angle of about 40 degrees). Everybody had got off the RIB, picked up their equipment and walked away without thinking, but Manthos hadn't made any fuss. He just sat there waiting until someone had a spare moment to help him out.

Manthos doesn't bother wearing any fins underwater, which is quite an unusual sight. All his forward propulsion came from his hands. He sometimes wears webbed gloves as an aid. I watched him put his head down and swipe his hands backwards in a powerful arc, which reminded me of a turtle. I've tried swimming without fins and it's by no means easy. I realised that most of my forward propulsion and manoeuvrability comes from my fins, so it must be tough going for Manthos. I guess it's a case of adapting as best as possible.

I watched Manthos take his first-ever rebreather student, Freddy Jousset, through his last bout of skills. Chris was overseeing the session. When we got back on dry land Chris handed out their well-earned certificates - they had both passed with flying colours. I had only spent a brief few days with Mr Manthos Marras, but could see he was a warm, approachable character with a huge passion for diving. I'm sure that the number of Greek Megalodon rebreather certifications will be hitting an all-time high very soon!

Manthos currently lives in Athens. He has passed over his successful medical business to his sister so he can concentrate entirely on diving. In 2014, he opened his second dive centre at the seaside tourist resort of Porto Rafti in East Attica, located near the airport (about 35km southeast of Athens). He has also opened a satellite centre at Vrilissia in the centre of Athens. His dive centre Aqua Team offers free intro courses for disabled divers residing in Greece. Every year Manthos organises, what he calls, a 'no barrier' tour, which encourages around 20-30 disabled people to take up scuba diving. He said: "What I have achieved with my disability has inspired others, even those who are afraid of water." It's strange to think that such a debilitating accident could open so many new exciting possibilities. I guess if you have the right mindset nothing is impossible.

Not only has Manthos excelled as a recreational instructor he has pushed through the boundaries and become a qualified trimix diver and has now become the world's very first physically challenged Megalodon rebreather instructor. His accolades are impressive by any standards. James Cameron's 2009 blockbuster movie depicts Sam Worthington as a former paraplegic marine (Jake Sully) who prefers to live his life through an Avatar. Manthos seems to survive pretty well the way he is; who needs an Avatar! Manthos certainly has my utmost respect. I'm looking forward to visiting Aqua Team in Greece sometime in the near future. Watch out for the exciting sequel coming soon. ■

"I had only spent a brief few days with Mr Manthos Marras but could see he was a warm, approachable character with a huge passion for diving"

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HUMANS vs COMPUTERS

PADI Technical Diving Division gurus **KARL SHREEVES** and **VIKKI BATTEN** compare the human brain with high-tech dive computers and look at how each has its place within the technical-diving realm

Photographs by PADI

Technology is what allows us to dive. Without it we would not be scuba divers. Technology is in everything we use to dive, from the superior fabric of a modern wetsuit that makes them comfortable, flexible and warm, to fins that help you move faster with less effort and regulators that offer minimal breathing resistance and amazing reliability.

Perhaps the fastest-growing area in scuba diving in recent years (much like the rest of our lives) is the development of computers, but some divers resist change and cling to the use of manual monitoring methods. So what are the reasons? Which jobs do computers do better than we do? And what do we need to do for ourselves?

WHAT SHOULD WE USE COMPUTERS FOR?

In the early days of tech diving, divers used dive tables for dive planning and a depth gauge and watch to monitor time and depth during the dive. We didn't have dive planning software or dive computers. By the end of the 20th century dive computers and dive planning software for tech divers were becoming increasingly reliable and the 21st century has seen an explosion in their development and use. Today, well-tested, reliable dive planning software is available to download to all your devices, and tech dive computers come in a variety of designs, are widely available and very reliable.

So why do some divers still choose to use dive tables and/or not use dive computers? The most common reasons given are:

Cost: Some divers feel that a full tech dive computer is too expensive.

Distrust: Other divers' concerns stem from a distrust of dive computers. The argument is that a table can't fail, make a mistake or have a low battery.

Understanding: Finally, some divers believe that only by learning to use dive tables can a diver understand tissue loading and how to plan dives correctly.

Today, all of these reasons are obsolete and here are some of the reasons why:

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COST

While tech dive computers are more expensive than a beginner's computer, in the context of investing in tech gear, the cost is pretty reasonable.

There is a huge variety, so you can choose whether to invest in a top-of-the-range tech diving computer that will last as your diving range increases, or to take it step by step and buy something more economical to start with. Some tech dive computers are upgradeable so they can grow with your diving.

Tip top gear is vital for tech diving. If you can't afford the gear you need for the dives you want to do, save your pennies and wait until you can buy what you need before you do the diving that needs that gear.



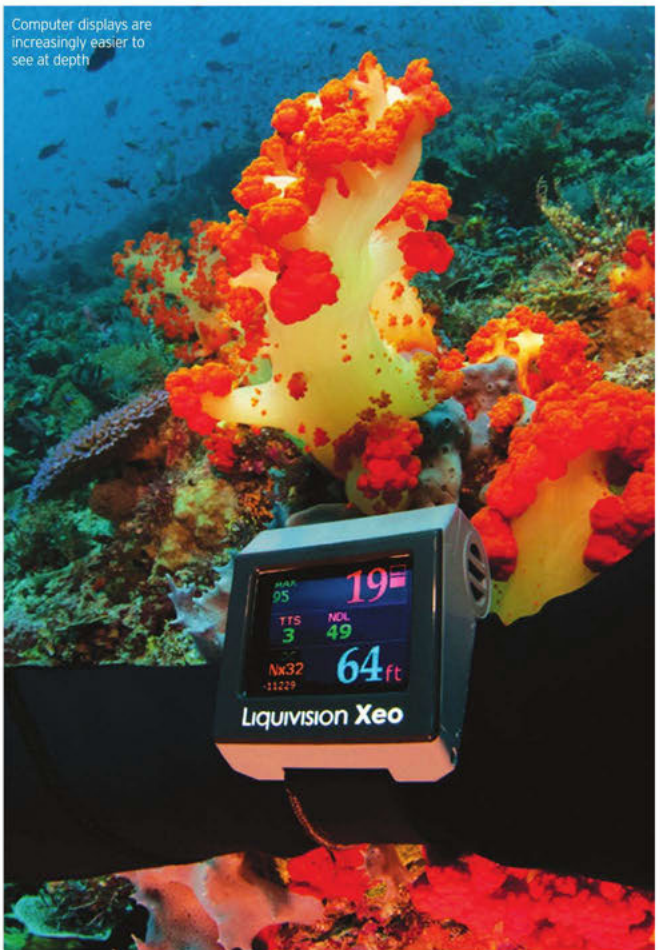
DISTRUST

You can still use a table for planning tech dives, of course, but increasingly divers use dive planning software to plan their dives and take two tech computers, so that they have a back-up, to carry out the dive. Why? Well, it's all about using the best tool for the job:

1. Human beings are very good at some things, but computers are better at rapid, accurate calculations using multiple inputs. In this case the inputs are variables such as time, depth, gases and a decompression algorithm.

2. Tech dive computers calculate your decompression based on the dive you made - not the dive you should have made or thought you made. This means that your 'bailout/back-up plans' are integrated into your dive computer and easy to access.

3. In an emergency, a dive computer unburdens you, whereas a table burdens you. You just look at your computer and/or back-up computer for your deco information - you don't have to check your depth and timing device, then follow columns, lines and rows to figure out your stop time or work out which of your back-up plans is closest to what has happened. Most CCRs have onboard computers that either automatically, or with just a couple of button presses, switch to open circuit when you bailout. If you already have one problem (something that causes you to need to change your plan, abort or bailout) you want the simplest solution, with the least stress, to help you work out changes to your dive plan.



4. Tech dive computers give you more options and versatility in an emergency. You can pre-program the gases you have in a team so that you can switch onto them if needed, but even if you didn't pre-program the gas that becomes available (maybe it was supplied by another team, for example), you can edit your computer to accommodate another gas. You would have to carry A LOT of dive tables to account for every possible gas, especially when you start using trimix and have any number of possible gas mixes.

5. A computer malfunction that gives you bad information is highly unlikely. You are far more likely to use good information incorrectly, which is equally an issue with tables and computers. Computer problems, on the extremely rare occasion when they occur, almost always result in no information - e.g. a dead screen.

5. This raises the remaining issue, which is reliability. Given that they're simply printed plastic, aren't tables more reliable than computers? The reality is that modern computers have better than a 1 in 1,000 failure rate. With two, that means, assuming you care for the instruments as directed by the manufacturer, you have about a one in a million chance of not having a working computer on a single dive. With a team of three, the probability works out to 1 in 1,000,000,000,000,000,000.

Be honest with yourself. If you wear two computers and take care of them as directed, you are far more likely to misread or lose a table, or misread the depth and/or time and use the wrong table than to find yourself without a working computer.

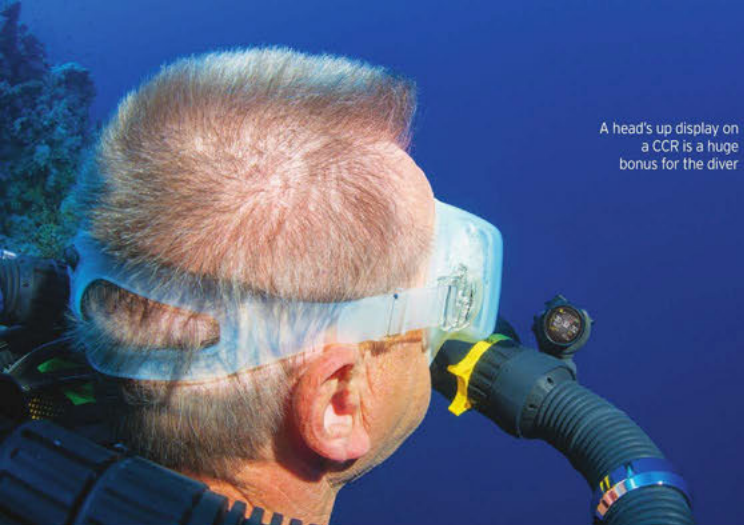
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A head's up display on a CCR is a huge bonus for the diver

Biography

Karl Shreeves and Vikki Batten are Directors of PADI's Technical Diving Division. They work on opposite sides of the world, but often work together thanks to another kind of computer. Karl and Vikki share a passion for education and diving, but frequently have different opinions. This makes them a great team and as Karl once said during a heated discussion: "If we both thought the same thing, one of us would be redundant!"



Software installed on a tablet is the perfect buddy for a tech diver

UNDERSTANDING

Some divers claim that tables help you understand decompression theory and dive planning better than learning to plan dives using dive computers, because you follow the lines on the tables and have letters to represent residual nitrogen.

First of all, most planning software creates tables, so you get the same benefits as manual tables, but it only takes a few minutes to create and compare complex plans and back-ups. On top of this some software (dive planning or dive logging) has great animations of tissue loading, which is linked to the dives you are planning/have completed. As you play the animation it scrolls through the dive giving a very simple visual of what is likely to be happening in the diver's body at each point in the dive. This illustrates which tissues have residual gas after each dive, where the highest loading is, and why it is important to observe decompression ceilings. You can even run different scenarios to choose between getting out of the water quicker, the best off-gassing curves and surfacing with the least risk manageable.

SO WHAT IS THE HUMAN BRAIN BETTER AT THAN DIVE COMPUTERS?

So, if computers are better than the human brain at planning dives and giving us on the fly information about our dive plan, what do we need our brains for?

While computers are excellent at calculating numbers and their abilities are expanding all the time, the human brain is still superior when it comes to judgement and application of information in the water. So here are some of the things you need your brain for during a tech dive:

Checking equipment before and during the dive and judging whether it is working correctly. Remind yourself that this is an ongoing process throughout the dive and you will have a better chance of spotting/avoiding a problem early.

Working in a group, communicating with and responding to your team, based on what happens. Maybe you are just keeping an eye on each other and staying in your team formation or maybe you are telling each other how much deco you have left or what depth you need to stop at. Awareness and communication are the keys to staying together and are a human skill.

Responding to emergencies. The human brain can process what is happening, sift through the information and prioritise actions based on prior experience and training, all in a split second. The more familiar you are with the options, the more you practice them, the easier it is. So make

sure you have the correct training and keep your skills up to date. If you KNOW what to do, it also helps you stay calm.

Of course, your computer may support you in an emergency situation and some even advise you on a course of action, e.g. a dive computer may advise that you to ascend if it has a low battery. However, the computer doesn't know whether it is better to ascend straight away or swim back to the entry point first.

Finally, the human brain can do something that no computer can do. It can feel emotions and enjoy itself. We see the beauty of the underwater world, the creatures that live there and even enjoy being with our teammates on a practice dive.

So, for those skills computers are better at we have invented the tools to help ourselves, but perhaps the best thing about being human is that we are not just calculating machines. We are emotional beings that, whether on land or underwater can chat, laugh, share our problems, and help each other. Together our shared experiences and passion for diving make us more than just a group of people going diving, they make us teammates and buddies and I think it will be a while before computers can do that job! ■

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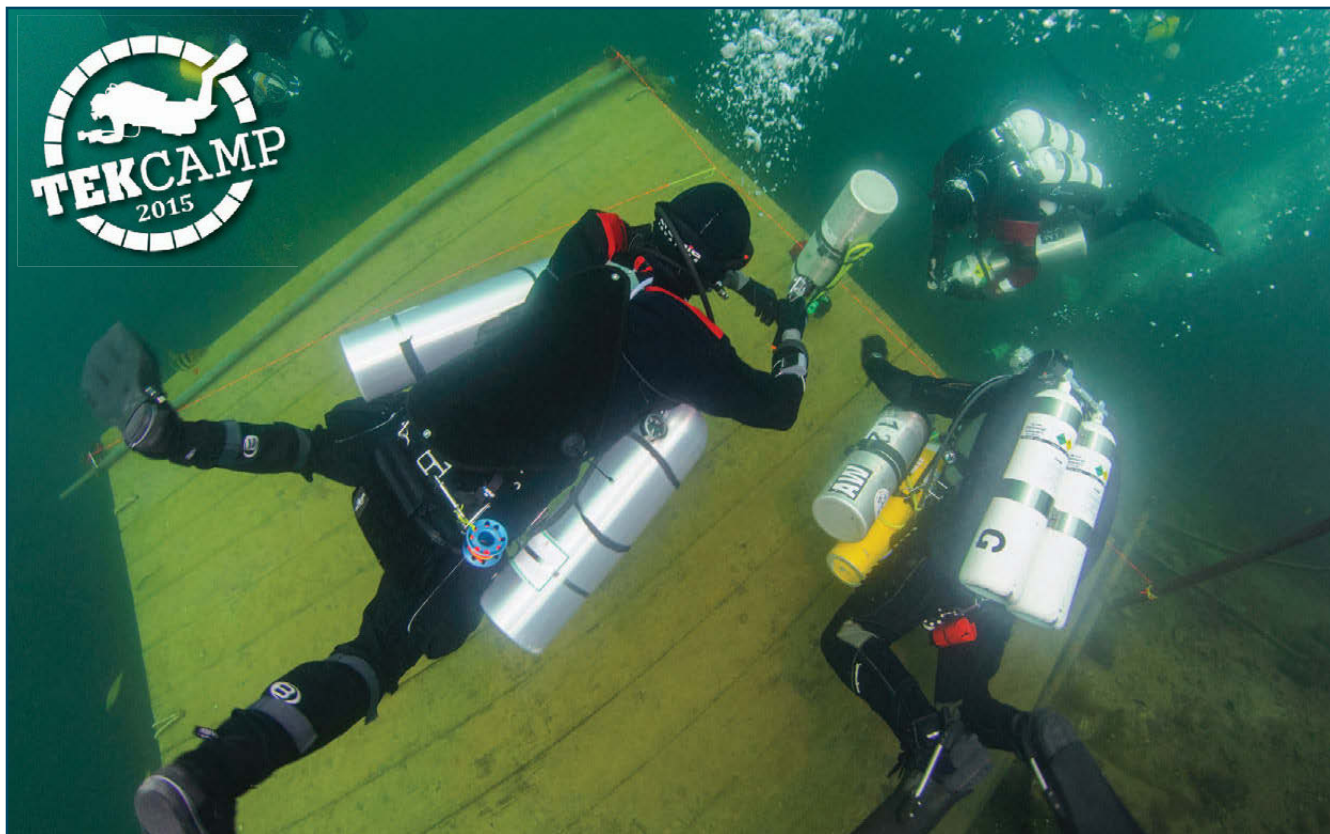


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LAST CALL FOR **TEKCAMP 2015**



Time is running out to sign up for TEKCamp 2015, which kicks off on 13 July at Vobster Quay in Somerset. Whether you're just curious about tech or a hardcore 'tech ninja' who appreciates the joys of taking more than one bottle into the shower, TEKCamp is for you.

Preparations for this year's event are all but complete, with a fabulous line-up of leading tech gurus from all the leading training agencies confirmed to attend. Over five solid days, TEKCamp attendees will take part in a packed-schedule of diving workshops covering all aspects of tech - all designed to help you to become a better, safer and more-confident diver, whatever your experience level.

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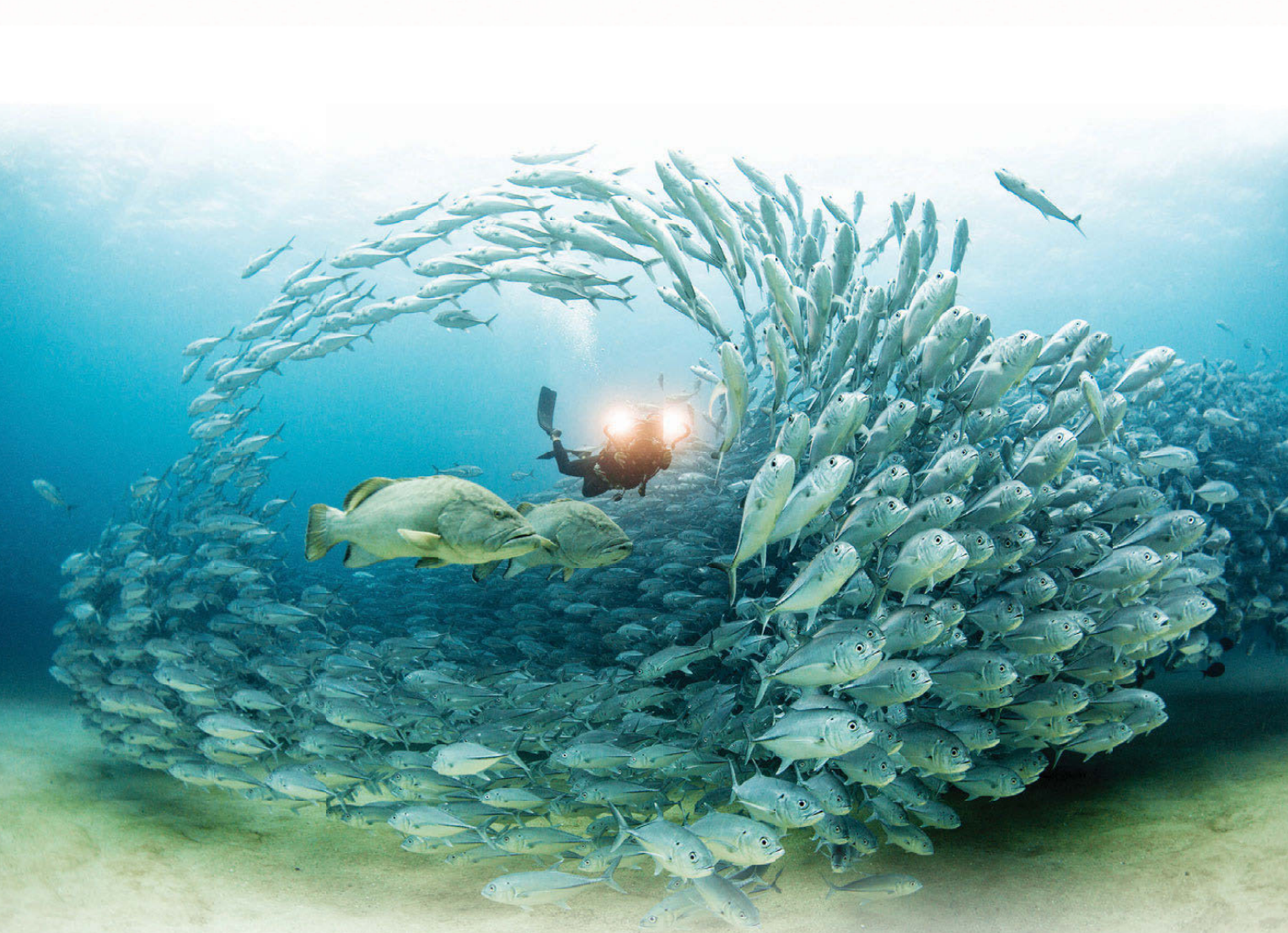
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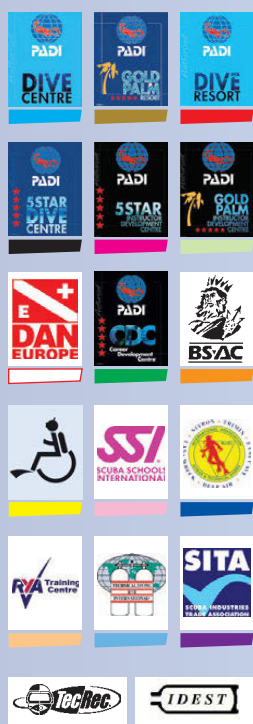
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Opening Hours: 8.30 - 5.30 Mon to Friday.
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Air to 300 Bar. BSAC, TDI, SDI & PSA. EH, TD, CAOS. Cylinder testing IDEST 2v, Regulator servicing, Air, Nitrox, Trimix, TDI Technical courses. Suit repairs.

SUSSEX

OCEAN VIEW DIVING SERVICES LTD

160 South Street,
Lancing,
West Sussex
BN15 8AU.
Tel: 01903 767224
Fax: 01903 754361
Email: info@oceanviewdiving.co.uk
Website: www.oceanviewdiving.co.uk
PADI 5★ IDC Centre. IANTD, TDI, OSS, OST, EH, BS. Air to 300 Bar, Nitrox. Padi Tec Rec. Tri-mix. Mail order, suit repairs, holidays abroad, on-site indoor pool. Licenced bar and club. Largest selection of equipment in Sussex.

YORKSHIRE

THE DIVERS WAREHOUSE

911 Wakefield Road,
Bradford,
West Yorkshire,
BD4 7QA
Tel: 01274-307555
Email: sales@diverswarehouse.co.uk
Website: www.diverswarehouse.co.uk
Opening Hours: 8:30 - 17:30 Mon - Fri, Thursday 8:30 - 19:00, Saturday 8:30 - 17:00, Sunday 10:00 - 16:00 PADI 5★ Centre - Pool sessions Shipley Pool Wednesdays 18:30 - 20:30 Servicing, Cylinder Testing (Idest Approved), Equipment Hire, Large Equipped Shop with changing facilities, classroom, online sales, large parking area, PADI courses, equipment from snorkelling to Technical diving

THE DIVER TRAINING COLLEGE

Malt Kiln Lane,
Appleton Roebuck,
York,
North Yorkshire
YO23 7DT
Tel: 01904 744424 / 07967 742420
Fax: 01904 744724
Email: ops@cdms-diving.co.uk
Website: www.dtc-diving.co.uk
Opening hours: 9.00am-5.00pm Mon-Sat.
Air to 300 Bar. PADI 5★ Centre, OSS-OST-BS-Nitrox. Full range of PADI specialties, RYA courses and specialist commercial diving courses. Full range of equipment sales from our well stocked dive shop. Open Mon-Sat.

ROBIN HOOD WATERSPORTS

152 Leeds Road,
Heckmondwike,
West Yorkshire
WF16 9BJ
Tel: 01924 444888
Fax: 01924 474529
E-mail: sally@roho.co.uk
Website: www.roho.co.uk
Opening Hours: Open Times: Mon, Tues, Weds, Fri - 9.15-6pm Thurs 9.15-8pm Sat - 9.15 - 5pm. OSS,OST, BS, IDEST, EH, Nitrox. PADI Dive Centre, BSAC Premier level. Training in our on-site heated pool and lecture rooms. Home of the renowned ROHO drysuits. Nitrox courses & fills. Gigantic 5000sq ft showroom fully stocked with dive watersports & snowboarding equipment. Friendly, helpful staff and instructors. Equipment hire.

IRELAND

CO CORK

OCEANADDICTS

Kinsale, Co. Cork, Ireland

Tel: 00353 (0)87-7903211

Email: anne@oceanaddicts.ie

Website: www.oceanaddicts.ie

Opening Hours: 9.00am to 6.00pm. Air to 300, PADI Resort, DAN, LB, ESI, ACC, AT, UWP, NDCF, CAOS, Nitrox. Liveboard and day-boat diving, groups and individuals welcome, friendly atmosphere, wrecks and reefs, great photo opportunities, courses available, live the adventure on Ireland's South Coast.



CO DONEGAL

MEVAGH DIVE CENTRE LTD

Milford Road, Carrigat, Letterkenny, Co. Donegal, Ireland

Tel: 00353 749154708

Mob: 00353 8765 90264

Email: reception@mevaghdiving.com

Website: www.mevaghdiving.com

Opening Hours: 9am to 7.30pm. Air to 300 Bar, PADI 5★ Dive Centre, EH, ESI, TD, AIP, Acc, FCF, AT, AYRD, UWP, CH, BH, NDCF, CAOS, Nitrox, Tri Mix. Mevagh Dive Centre PADI 5★. All levels of diving including Technical diving. 11m catamaran with dive lift. Accommodation with Swimming pool.



NORTHERN IRELAND

COUNTY DOWN

DV DIVING

138 Mount Steward Road, Newtownards, Co. Down, BT22 2ES.

Tel: 02891 464671/861686

Fax: 02891 464671

Email: info@dvdviving.co.uk

Website: www.dvdviving.co.uk

OSS, OST, BS, EH. DV Diving offer one of Europe's most comprehensive ranges of scuba, technical & commercial diving and powerboat training courses - for the complete beginner through to instructor development for the most experienced professionals



PORTSTEWART

AQUAHOLICS DIVE CENTRE

14 Portmore Road,

Portstewart

Tel: 28 70832584

Email: dive@aquaholics.org

Website: www.aquaholics.org

Opening Hours: 9am to 5pm. Air to 300 Bar. PADI 5★ CENTRE. NITROX, TRIMIX. EH, ESI, TD, EA, AIP, ACC, FCF, AT, AYRD, UWP, CH, BH, NDCF, CAOS. Offering the full range of courses from Beginner to Trimix. Diving the spectacular clear water of the North Coast from Rathlin Island to Malin Head.



OVERSEAS DIVE OPERATORS

AUSTRALIA

LIVEBOARD



Australia - Cairns

Spirit of Freedom

www.spiritoffreedom.com.au

Passengers	26	Elec.	240
Cabins	11	Courses	Y
En-suite	Y	AirCon	Y
Length	37m	Nitrox	Y
Hull	Steel	CCR	N

LIVEBOARD



Australia - Cairns, Queensland

Spoilsport

www.mikeball.com

Passengers	29	Elec.	240
Cabins	15	Courses	Y
En-suite	Y	AirCon	Y
Length	30m	Nitrox	Y
Hull	Aluminium	CCR	Y

BERMUDA

DIVE BERMUDA

The Southampton Fairmont Hotel, 101 South Shore Road, Southampton, SN021

Tel: 1(441)238-2332

Email: crew@bermudascuba.com

Web: www.bermudascuba.com

Opening Hours: 08:00-17:00

Air to 200 bar. PADI 5★ IDC. ESI, EA, Acc, FCF, UWP, NDCF, CAOS, DBDA, National Geographic. Bermuda's only 5★ IDC! All dives guided by experienced instructors. Dive and snorkel trips daily. Full hotel facilities available on site. Kayaks and paddleboards rental available.



CAYMAN ISLANDS

SUNSET HOUSE - GRAND CAYMAN'S HOTEL FOR DIVERS BY DIVERS

390 South Church Street

PO Box 479GT Grand Cayman

Cayman Islands

Tel: 1-345-949-7111

Fax: 1-345-949-7101

Email: keith.sahm@sunsethouse.com

Website: www.sunsethouse.com

Opening Hours: 7:00 - 17:30 (Dive Centre Hours). Air To 200 Bar. Stingray City and ex-USS Kittiwake Adventures. PADI 5★ IDC. EH, ESI, EA, Acc, FCF, AT (with packages), AYRD, UWP, CH, BH, NDCF, CAOS (with packages). Full-Service dive operations located at Sunset House. Recreational boat dives. Incredible shore diving. Nitrox. Cathy Church. U/W photo centre. 53 Rooms for accommodations. Bar, restaurant onsite. Stepping out of my room, catching that breath of fragrant tropical breeze, gazing into the alluring blue water...I found the essence of Sunset House.



CYPRUS

ALPHA DIVERS

2 Pyla Gardens, Dhekelia Road, Larnaca, Pyla Tourist Area, 7081, Cyprus

Tel: +357 24647519

+357 99866383

Email: info@alpha-divers.com

Website: www.alpha-divers.com

5 star PADI Instructor Development & Tec Rec Centre, BSAC Tec Centre and Seamanship Centre offering the very highest in course from beginner to Instructor.



CYDIVE DIVE CYPRUS

20, Myrra Complex 33, Poseidonos Ave 1, Paphos 8042, Cyprus.

Tel: 00 357 26 934271

Email: info@cydive.com

Website: www.cydive.com

PADI. The First PADI 5★ Career Development Centre & Centre of Excellence in Cyprus. CAOS, EH, CHAIPAcc, FCFAT, ESI's, EAS', BH, AYRD, UWP, OW's, NDCF. Fantastic Location, an exciting programme with 2 Boat Dives & Daytrips Daily. Instructor programmes 4 times a year.



LARNACA DIVE-IN

HTTC Ltd (Hyperbaric Therapy Treatment Ctr)

Poseidonia Medical Centre

47a Eleftherias Avenue,

Aradippou, Larnaca,

CYPRUS 7102

Tel: 00357 24 252501/24 hr

Emergency Diver Help Line 99 518837

Fax: 00357 24 252502

Email: info@hbocyprus.com

Website: www.hbocyprus.com

Opening Hours: 9-5 Mon-Sat.

24/7 Emergency Diver Response. Air to 232 Bar. If you are concerned or feel that you have unusual signs or symptoms after a dive please always get it checked. We have a 24/7, 365 days service with a full Hyperbaric Medical team on standby at our 14 man fully computerized, HAUX 2200 Starmed Unit. We are the Preferred Provider for IDAN, UK Armed Forces, US Armed Forces, NATO and many more. We offer Direct Insurance billing for all treatments. Also Dry Dives to 40 metres, PADI Chamber Specialty Courses, DAN In-Chamber Tender Courses, DAN Chamber Operator Courses, DAN Consumer and Instructor Courses to all Levels.



EGYPT

LIVEBOARD



Egypt, Sharm El Sheikh

VIP One

www.vipone.com

Passengers	16	Elec.	220
Cabins	8	Courses	Y
En-suite	Y	AirCon	Y
Length	29m	Nitrox	Y
Hull	Wood	CCR	N

LIVEBOARD



Egypt

South Moon

www.seaqueen.com

Passengers	200	Elec.	240/110
Cabins	10	Courses	Y
En-suite	Y	AirCon	Y
Length	27m	Nitrox	Y
Hull	Wood	CCR	N

AQUARIUS DIVING CLUB

Coral Sea,

Waterworld

Nabq Bay,

Sharm el Sheikh

Tel: (+20) 01001232785

E: info@aquariusredsea.com

Website: www.aquariusredsea.com

Opening Hours: 09:00 - 17:00

Air to 200 Bar. PADI 5★ EH, LB, ESI, EA, ACC, FCF, AT, AYRD, UWP, BH, NDCF, CAOS. Dive centre's in Sharm el Sheikh, Hurgharda, Marsa Alam, Hamata, Makadi & Sahl Hashish. Diving for complete beginners to experienced divers. Diving trips from shore, daily boat, zodiac and liveboards.



CAMEL DIVE CLUB & HOTEL

Centre of Na'ama Bay,

PO Box 10,

Sharm El Sheikh,

South Sinai,

Egypt.

Tel: +20 69 3600 700

Fax: +20 69 3600 601

Email: info@cameldive.com

Website: www.cameldive.com

PADI 5★ Gold Palm IDC Centre, BSAC, Acc. AT, LB, ESI, EA, BH, AYRD, UWP, OW, NDCF, TD, CAOS, EH, FCF. The Red Seas friendliest diver hotel and dive centre. Join us for spectacular diving and the best apres dive in Sharm.

Established 1986



EAGLE DIVERS

Ocean Club Hotel,

23 City Council Street,

Hadaba,

Sharm el Sheikh

Tel: 002 01200001590

002 01200001591

Email: info@eagle-divers.com

Website: www.eagle-divers.com

Opening Hours: 8.00am - 6.00pm

PADI 5★ resort & TecRec Centre.

Nitrox. Air to 220 Bar. EH, LB, ESI, TD, EA, AIP, Acc, FCF, AT, AYRD, UWP, NDCF, CAOS. Providing first class personalised service in one of the worlds top diving destinations.

We pride ourselves on making your Red Sea holiday the best it can be.



OVERSEAS DIVE OPERATORS

ELITE DIVING'S DIVERS UNITED

Uni Sharm Hotel,
Sharm Elysees St,
Um El Sid Hill,
Hadaba, Sharm El Sheikh

Tel: 0020 1224 308 780
Email: info@elite-diving.com

Web: www.elite-diving.com

Opening Hours: 8.00am to 19.00pm

Air to 220 Bar. Divers United PADI 5 Resort. Elite Diving. BSAC Diver Training Center. EH, LB, ESI, EA, AIP, ACC, FCF, AT, AYRD, UWP, BH, NDCF, CAOS. NITROX, ATOL Bonded through UK Tour operator. British Owner managers, offering Daily Boat Diving on some of the best reefs in the world, House reef, PADI & BSAC courses, Liveboards, Special excursions.



ILIOS DIVE CLUB

Steigenberger Al Dau
Resort, Hurghada,
Red Sea, Egypt

Tel: 0020 65 346 5442

Email: info@iliostdivclub.com

Website: www.iliostdivclub.com

Opening Hours: 8am - 5pm

Air to 200 Bar, Nitrox, Padi Course up to Divemaster, Handicapped diving, Snorkeling. EH, ESI, EA, ACC, FCF, AT, AYRD, UWP, BH, NDCF, CAOS. Ilios Dive Club - One with the Red Sea. The Steigenberger Al Dau Resort, Red Sea, Hurghada is the home of Ilios Dive Club. On an area of 360m² we are offering everything diver, skin diver and those going to be need to have a perfect holiday. Due to over 20 years of experience in the professional management of a dive centre we guarantee our guests wonderful dives in the Red Sea.



OCEAN COLLEGE

Naama Bay Hotel, Naama Bay,
Sharm El Sheikh, Egypt

Tel: 0020 1228075516

Email: info@ocean-college.com

Website: www.ocean-college.com

Opening Hours: 0800 - 1700.

Air to 300 Bar. PADI 5★ IDC, Nitrox, ATOL Bonded. EH, ESI, EA, AIP, FCF, AYRD, UWP, BH, NDCF, CAOS. Ocean College dive centre's are located at the Naama bay hotel, the Hilton Waterfalls and the Sensatori resort..



RED SEA DIVING COLLEGE

Sultana Building,
Naama Bay,
South Sinai,
Egypt

Tel: 0020 69 3600145

Email: info@redseacollege.com

Website: www.redseacollege.com

Opening hours: 8am - 9pm.

Air to 200 Bar. EH, LB, ESI, TD, EA, ACC, FCF, AT, AYRD, UWP, BH, NDCF, CAOS. Nitrox, National Geographic. PADI 5★ CDC. Multi Award winning centre offering all courses from entry level to professional. Conducted from a stunning beach-front location, boasting the best facilities in Sharm.



SINAI COLLEGE - DIVING CENTER

Sharm Inn Amarin,
Hadaba,
Sharm El Sheikh
South Sinai 60907,
Egypt

Tel: +201154055100

Email: info@sinaicollege.com

Website: www.sinaicollege.com

Opening hours: 7.30am till 7pm every day of the year. Air to 200 Bar. EH, LB, ESI, EA, ACC, FCF, AT, AYRD, UWP, NDCF, COAS. Nitrox, PADI Dive Centre. We are an European run and managed dive center based in Sharm El Sheikh with a friendly and professional atmosphere. We provide daily diving, mini safaris and liveboards.



FUERTEVENTURA

DEEP BLUE DIVING S.L

Barcelo el Castillo,
Caleta de Fuste,
Fuerteventura, 35610

Tel: +34 606 275 468 or

+34 928 163 172

Email: info@deep-blue-diving.com

Website: www.deep-blue-diving.com

Facebook: Deep.Blue.Diving.Fuerteventura

Opening Hours: All year 9am-5pm

Air to 200. PADI 5★ GOLD PALM IDC CENTRE & IE LOCATION. EH, ESI, AIP, ACC, FCF, AYRD, UWP, NDCF, CAOS. WIFI, Equipment Washing and Storage Rooms. Discover Scuba to Instructor. All year round, water front location, small groups, 20-25m visibility. Exclusive dive sites, after dive sector.



GREECE

CRETE UNDERWATER CENTER

Mirabello Beach Hotel, Agios Nikolaos
72100 Crete, Greece.

PO Box 100

Tel/Fax: 00 30 284 1022 406

Mobile: 0030 6945 2444 34 /

0030 6944 1268 46

Email: info@creteunderwatercenter.com

Website: www.creteunderwatercenter.com

PADI Resort D.C., Day Boats/ Servicing/ Accommodation/ Technical/ IANTD/ PADI/BSAC ResortCenter/Air /Nitrox/ Trimix/ KitionSale. Based within a hotel complex directly on the beach, we provide a great variety of diving services for Beginners through to Advanced and Technical Divers. As a well equipped resort and diving centre, we tailor packages to suit your individual or group needs.



NERO-SPORT DIVING CENTER

Limni Keri, Machairado,
Zakynthos

29092 Greece

Tel: 0030 269 502 8481

0030 698 566 6645

Email: dennis@nero-sport.de

Website: www.nero-sport.de

Opening Hours: All Year, Everyday

9:30 - 18:00 (Except 15.11. - 15.12.)

Air to 200 Bar. PADI DIVE CENTRE, IAC 5★ EH, ESI, ACC, AT, FCF, AYRD, UWP, NDCF, CAOS. Free childcare. 2-5 trips a day. Day trips. Night diving. Own accommodation. Snack bar. Great family offers. Special group offers. Diving all year round.



GALAPAGOS

LIVEBOARD



San Cristobal, Galapagos

M/V Galapagos Sky
www.galapagossky.com

Passengers.....16	Elec.....110/220
Cabins.....8	Courses.....Y
En-suite.....Y	AirCon.....Y
Length.....30m	Nitrox.....Y
Hull.....Steel	CCR.....N



HONDURAS

LIVEBOARD



Utila, Bay Islands of Honduras

M/V Caribbean Pearl II

www.bayislandsyachtcharters.com

Passengers.....18	Elec.....220
Cabins.....9	Courses.....Y
En-suite.....Y	AirCon.....Y
Length.....36m	Nitrox.....Y
Hull.....Aluminium	CCR.....N

UTILA DIVE CENTRE/MANGO INN

Utila, Bay Islands, Honduras

Tel/Fax: (504) 24253327

Email: info@utiladivecentre.com

Website: www.utiladivecentre.com

www.goproutila.com

Opening Hours: 7am to 7pm

Air to 220 Bar. PADI Career Development Centre and IANTD facility. Nitrox, Trimix, Rebreather friendly, National Geographic Facility. EH, ESI, TD, EA, ACC, FCF, AT, AYRD, UWP, CAOS. PADI certification courses from beginner to Instructor (monthly PADI IDC's) with diving packages and accommodation. The island of Utila offers spectacular Caribbean diving and Whale sharks.



INDONESIA

BIG BUBBLE DIVE

Turtle Beach, Gili Trawangan,
Lombok NTB,
Indonesia

83233.

Tel: +623706125020

+62811390969

Email: info@bigbubblediving.com

Website: www.bigbubblediving.com

Open: 8am to 7pm daily all year round

Established in 2001 by UK Owner Anna Walker, The crystal clear waters (up to 40m visibility) will ensure you see the very best of the aquatic life that diving in Indonesia has to offer.



BLUE MARLIN DIVE

Gili Trawangan, Gili Meno,
Gili Air, Senggigi, Lombok,
Indonesia.

Tel: ++62 (0) 370 632424

Fax: ++62 (0) 370 642286

Email: info@bluemarindive.com

Website: www.bluemarindive.com

PADI 5★ Premier IDC Centre. Acc., AT, LB, ESI, EA, BH, AYRD, UWP, OW, NDCF, TD, EH, CH, AIP, CAOS, FCF. The Gili Islands most professional & friendly 5★ IDC Centre (established 16 years). Spectacular world class ocean diving. Ocean front restaurant, bar, night club & freshwater pool. Full retail dive shop on site. DM internship programmes. Full technical diving facility offering TDI & IANTD. Blue Marlin has it's own luxury liveboard offering trips throughout the Indonesian Archipelago. Packages available.



TWO FISH DIVERS

One operator/three tropical-island resorts:

Bunaken Island, North
Sulawesi Lembeh Straits,
North Sulawesi
Lembongan Island,
Bali

Tel: 0062-811-432-805

Email: info@twofishdivers.com

Website: www.twofishdivers.com

Air to 200 bar. PADI 5★ IDC. Nitrox, EH, ESI, TD, EA, AIP, ACC, FCF, AT, AYRD, UWP, NDCF, CAOS. Two Fish Divers is owned and run by Tina and Nigel from UK. Each of their three tropical-island resorts offer a friendly and relaxed atmosphere with some of the best diving in Indonesia:

- 1) Bunaken Island, North Sulawesi - the award-winning reefs of Bunaken Marine Park.
- 2) Lembeh Straits, North Sulawesi - the muck-diving capital of the world.
- 3) Lembongan Island, Bali - home of the mola-mola's and manta's of Bali.

All dive resorts are PADI 5★, have european management, max 24 divers, small dive groups, and a friendly and personal service. Organise a trip to one of more of these resorts, or book an Indo Dive Safari with all three resorts!



LANZAROTE

MANTA DIVING LANZAROTE

Juan Carlos 1,
No.6, Local 5,
Puerto del Carmen

Tel: (0034) 928 516815

Mobile: (0034) 649 121142

Email: info@manta-diving-lanzarote.com

manta-diving-lanzarote-val@hotmail.com

Skype: manta-dive-centre

Website: www.manta-diving-lanzarote.com

Opening hours: Mon-Sat 8.30-5.30pm all year round.

Air to 200 Bar. PADI IRRA RESORT CENTRE, BSAC RESORT CENTRE. OSS, ACC, AT, AYRD, BH, CAOS, CH, NDCF, EA, EH, UWP, ESI, FCF. PADI. Courses & Specialties, Discover Scuba & Snorkelling. Fully equipped, spacious centre, 150mtrs from best sites in Lanzarote. Group Rates All level of divers welcome. NITROX.



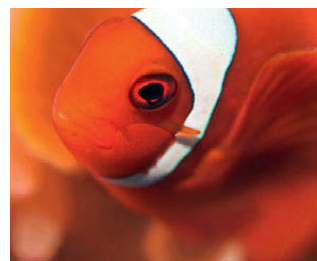
SAFARI DIVING LANZAROTE

Playa de la Barrilla 4, Playa Chica Puerto
Del Carmen,
Tel: 0034 928511992 or
0034 646752512

Email: enquiry@safaridiving.com

Website: www.safaridiving.com

PADI, PADI 5★ Centre, BSAC, PADI Premier Centre, NAUI, SAA, ACC, AT, LB, ESI, EAs, BH, AYRD, UWP, OWS, NDCF, ATOL, TD, CAOS, EH, CH, AIP, FCF. SSI & RYA. We are a PADI dive centre. BSAC Premier Centre and Seamanship Centre. SSI Diver Training Centre. British owned, beach based diving centre, established for over 18 years. Spectacular Ocean diving all year round which include reefs, drop offs, wrecks etc to suit all levels of diver and the complete beginner! Special offers available for dive packages for shore, night and boat dives.



MALTA

DIVE DEEP BLUE MALTA

9/11 Annanija Street, Bugibba, St Pauls Bay, Malta SPB 1320

Tel: 00 356 21 583946

Mob: 00 356 99 868957

Email: dive@divedeepblue.com

Website: www.divedeepblue.com

Opening Hours: 8am till 6pm.

PADI 5★ IDC. EH, ESI, TD, EA, AIP, ACC, FCF, AT, AYRD, UWP, CH, BH, NDCF, CAOS, Nitrox/Trimix. Facilities include: Dive Shop, Private parking, swimming pool, sun deck, gas filling/blending station, equipment rental/sales, drying and storage areas, toilets/showers, A/C class rooms, technical facility, CCR support.



DIVESHACK SCUBA SCHOOL

14a, Qui Si Sana, Seafront, Sliema, SLM3111, Malta

Tel: 00 356 2133 8558

00 356 9999 3483

Email: info@divemalta.com

Website: www.divemalta.com

Opening Hours: 7 Days a week from 08.00 till 18.00 (17.00 in winter).

PADI 5★ IDC, National Geographic and TecRec Facility. Seafront Location. Resident Course Director. All PADI Courses Taught. Rebreather Friendly. Escorted Dives from Shore/Boat round Malta, Gozo and Comino. Fully Stocked Shop.

Operating from Comino May to Oct. Nitrox, Trimix, National Geographic. Speciality side mount and Tec side mount. Acc, AIP, AT, AYRD, BH, BS, CAOS, CH, EA, EH, ESI, FCF, NDCF, OSS + OWS, OST, TD, UWP.

DIVEWISE

Westin Dragonara Resort, Malta

Tel: (+356) 21 356 441

Email: info@divewise.com.mt

Website: www.divewise.com.mt

Opening Hours: 7 days a week from 9am till finish.

Air to 300 Bar. PADI 5★ CDC Centre. Nitrox, Trimix, Boat Diving, Day trips. EH, ESI, TD, EA, ACC, FCF, AT, AYRD, UWP, CH, BH, NDCF, CAOS. PADI's No1 centre in Malta offering all courses but specialising in Technical diving & Instructor level.



GOZO AQUA SPORTS

GOZO AQUA SPORTS, Rubat Road, Marsalforn, Gozo, Malta, MFN 9014

Tel: 0035621563037

Email: dive@gozoaqua sports.com

Website: www.gozoaqua sports.com

Opening Hours: 7 Days a week 08:00 – 18:00.

Air to 300 Bar. PADI 5★ IDC - DSAT TECREC centre & BSAC Resort, ESI, TD, ACC, AT, AYRD, UWP, CH, BH, NDCF, CAOS, Nitrox and Trimix Available, Technical & Rebreather Diver Support. Free WI-FI, Free Tea/Coffee/Water, Rinsing/Drying/Storage facilities, Wreck, Boat, Cavern, Digital Photography, Drysuit, Enriched Air, Equipment Specialist, Multilevel, Naturalist, Navigation, Night, PPB, Oxygen Provider, Search & Recovery, Project AWARE Fish ID Specialities.



PARADISE DIVING

Paradise Diving, Paradise Bay Resort Hotel, Cirkewwa, MLH9068, Malta

Tel: 0035621574116

0035621524363

Email: alison@paradisediving.com

Website: www.paradisediving.com

Open: May to October 08.30-17.00 Daily.

November to April by advance reservation. Air to 300 Bar. PADI 5★ RESORT. EH, ESI, EA, ACC, FCF, AT, AYRD, UWP, CH, BH, NDCF, CAOS, Nitrox. Three summer boat dives daily, Malta, Gozo, Comino. No boat surcharge! Private beach location, Cirkewwa. PADI courses. Free group places. Free transport, Mellieha, Bugibba, Qawra.



SEA SHELL DIVE COVE

Marfa Road, Mellieha, Malta

Tel: +356/21522595 /

+ 356/21521062

Fax: +356 2152 1062

Email: info@seashell-divecove.com

Website: www.seashell-divecove.com

EH, Nitrox, ESI, TD, CAOS, AIP, ACC, FCF, AT, AYRD, UWP, CH, BH, NDCF. Family run dive centre. Technical diving & courses. Escorted dives from shore/boat Malta, Gozo, Comino. Wreck dive specialist. Latest equipment for hire & for sale.



MEXICO

SCUBA CLUB COZUMEL

Av R Melgar Pro S Km 1.5, Cozumel, Q. Roo Mexico 77600

Tel: 52-987-872-1133

US# 727-230-9613

Fax: 727-388-3638

Email: scubacozumel@cozumel.net

Website: www.scubacozumel.com

Opening Hours: 24/7/365.

Acc, ESI, EH, AYRD, UWP, BH, FCF, CAOS. PADI 5★ Training center and Dive Resort offering dive packages including room, meals and diving. Full service 5 star training facility offering all levels of instruction and daily dive trips.

LIVEBOARD



Cabo San Lucas & Ensenada, Mexico

Solmar V

www.solmarv.com

Passengers	22	Elec.	110/220
Cabins	12	Courses	Y
En-suite	Y	AirCon	Y
Length	34m	Nitrox	Y
Hull	Steel	CCR	Y

PALAU

LIVEBOARD



Koror, Palau

Ocean Hunter Palau

www.oceanhunter.com

Passengers	18	Elec.	240
Cabins	9	Courses	Y
En-suite	Y	AirCon	Y
Length	31m	Nitrox	Y
Hull	Steel	CCR	Y

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www.solitude-one.com

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En-suite	Y	AirCon	Y
Length	52m	Nitrox	Y
Hull	Steel	CCR	Y

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Cosmix Adventures Inc

www.dive-vasco.com

Passengers	240	Elec.	240
Cabins	8	Courses	Y
En-suite	Y	AirCon	Y
Length	34m	Nitrox	Y
Hull	Steel	CCR	Y

LIVEBOARD



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www.discoveryfleet.com

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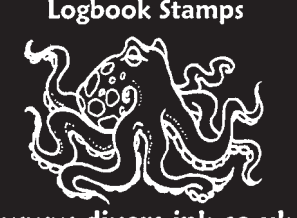
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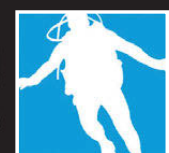
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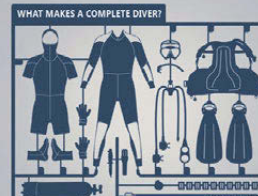
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paul ROSE

A magic day here in Pond Inlet: I'm looking north across the sea ice of Eclipse Sound to the mountains of Bylot Island. To the west I can see the entrance to Navy Board Inlet leading to the northern tip of Baffin Island 160km away where we will be camping for the next five weeks. It's going to be a wild place: The ice edge is at the top of the island and soon the whole of Navy Board Inlet will begin to break out - we'll be camping on a small raised rocky beach with millions of tons of ice roaring past. The open water will bring in the whales and I've heard that in most years the pods of bowheads, belugas and narwhals number in the hundreds. These are pristine waters!

Last week at the World Ocean Summit I was

the ocean's health. It wasn't long ago that we had no idea that we could overfish anything from the sea. My grandfather would have laughed if I'd said that one day we would have decimated most of our large fisheries. But now that we understand that we have truly become a force of nature we have to accept the responsibilities and act smartly. Here's what we can do:

World leaders should demonstrate ocean leadership by committing to ten percent protection of their EEZs as a minimum. Politicians and business influencers must embrace 'Blue Economies'. Illegal Unreported Unregulated (IUU) fishing can now be accurately monitored by satellite systems - so it's now within our reach to stop almost all IUU fishing. We need

Recovery Alliance projects being incredibly effective. And for divers to get involved on every dive, then you can't beat Project AWARE.

There is an excellent opportunity at COP 21 in Paris this year for world leaders to take action on climate change and therefore limit the effects of ocean acidification.

The three things each of us can do straight away to contribute to ocean conservation are:

1. Only buy legally caught fish.
2. Take personal responsibility for our plastic disposal.
3. Become an active 'ocean constituent' locally, nationally and internationally.

My bit in this is about being at the front line

"A high point for me [was meeting] the Indonesian Minister of Maritime Affairs and Fisheries, as her government has just blown up 41 illegal foreign fishing vessels. Now that's what I call ocean leadership!"

asked what the ocean meant to me and I said: "Freedom. Simplicity. Adventure. Promise". The anticipation of these weeks ahead has reinforced this meaning and helped me understand the Inuit response to what sea ice means to them: "Home. Food. Freedom. Tools. Clothing".

The start of an expedition is a familiar, fantastic feeling which brings me a clear head, a finely tuned focus and a vast amount of energy - the perfect time to reflect on the state of our oceans.

We are in a good place for action on ocean conservation issues as we have successfully raised the level of awareness to an all time high. For the first time in history, people understand that human activities directly affect

industry and governments to embrace the technology followed by governments showing commitment to ending IUU fishing by leading prosecutions.

Last week at the World Ocean Summit in Cascais it was a high point for me to meet Susi Pudjiastuti, the Indonesian Minister of Maritime Affairs and Fisheries, as her government has just blown up 41 illegal foreign fishing vessels. Now that's what I call ocean leadership!

Waste disposal into the sea is a continuing disgrace - we treat the sea as a bottomless pit for all of our wastes (out of sight, out of mind) and we need to get tough on polluters. The numerous plastic debris awareness programmes are working well with the Ocean

of science and filming in the last remaining wild, pristine places of the ocean. Thankfully that means living in some wild places - I've just met someone who was battered by almost constant 150km winds close to where we will be camping: I'm off to buy more guy ropes for my tent!

Paul is the Vice President of the Royal Geographical Society.

For 10 years he was the Base Commander of Rothera Research Station in Antarctica and was also the BAS Diving Officer. He presents television and radio programmes for the BBC.

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